SHORTER BIBLE PLAYS

BY

RITA BENTON

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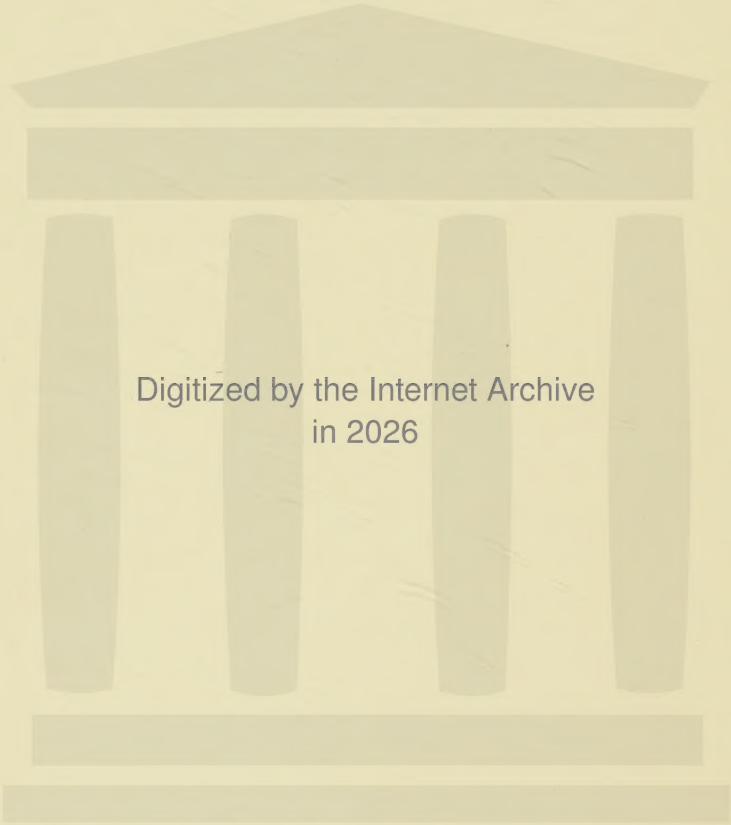
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THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH

The Abingdon Religious Education Texts
David G. Downey, General Editor
GEORGE HERBERT BETTS, Associate Editor

Shorter Bible Plays

BY
RITA BENTON

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WAMING COLLEGE
WAMIC

TO MY MOTHER

AND HER "SUNDAY" CHILDREN

Unto her little child, a mother saith:
"The Lord is everywhere, so have no fear."
The child is quieted to have *her* near.
Like unto God a mother comforteth.

And for her little child a mother prays:
"That he may love me much, but love God more!"
But 'tis our mothers that we all adore;
And for our mothers, give we God the praise.

For childhood clearer sees God's wondrous grace,
Sees God's love shining in his mother's face.

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To the kindness of Edward D. Waters we are indebted for the use of many of these photographs.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Increasingly the church is coming again to use religious pageantry and plays for instruction and worship. In the earlier history of religion the dramatic expression of religious aspiration and feeling was almost universal. The dramatic impulse is deeply grounded in human nature, and may be made to appeal to the highest attributes of reverence and devotion.

Children should usually themselves be the actors and not mere spectators. In acting Bible stories they learn how intimately the past is linked to the present, and how the struggles of to-day after truth, courage, love, are like the struggles of the patriarchs and prophets. The stories become more vivid, their charm grows, as we study them in action—our own action. And when we have finished the production of a Bible play a portion of the most beautiful of all literature is ours forever.

In a portion of the plays they act out, the children should, under wise leadership, devise and prepare their own parts and lines. Along with these spontaneously planned representations, however, should come a fair proportion of carefully prepared simple artistic plays adapted to the age and understanding of the child and calculated to teach the lesson desired. Besides teaching their own particular lessons, such plays will serve as a model and standard for the children in preparing their own presentations.

It is the purpose of the present volume to offer a collection of shorter Bible plays of high standard, great

beauty, simplicity, and careful adaptation. All of these plays have been used many times over with groups of children in church schools, and their value thoroughly proved. The editors offer the book to the church public believing it will be a helpful factor in the field of religious education.

COSTUMES

The costumes used in these Bible plays have been largely copied from Tissot's illustrations of the Bible.

A straight piece of bleached or unbleached muslin, seamed at the sides up to arm-hole, with a slit for the neck, has been found the simplest foundation costume.

Variations on this are:

A girdle.

Sleeves.

Fringes.

A cloak of contrasting color, of the same pattern as the slip, but open in front.

Several yards of material of contrasting color, thrown over the head or shoulders, or draped.

Strips of cloth, four to six inches wide, sewed the length of the costume. Black strips against white make an effective costume.

For the head use a square of white cloth bound round with a thick, dark cord.

For women the cloth may be lighter. They may wear two girdles instead of one, with the material puffed out between the girdles. Their veils also should be of lighter material; over these a heavy mantle may hang, if desired.

Barefoot sandals or Japanese sandals will do for the feet, if antique sandals cannot be made. In many cases it is preferable that the actors go barefoot.

For bracelets, crowns, scepters, fans, buy sheet copper or brass, tin shears, and cut as desired. These will last forever.

For soldier costumes, make brilliant, short tunics. Belt these in with a twelve-inch strip of brown buckram, which, in turn, is tied on with a bright cord. Use cone-shaped caps.

Egyptian costumes may always be indicated by a belt with a broad flap in the center, reaching from waist to hem. For headdresses, use striped cloth; draw the two front ends under the cloth and pin at the back of the head.

For Babylonian costumes, take several yards of material; sew fringe to the ends and one side; pin one end of the goods at the back of model; wind goods about waist of model so as to form a skirt, and pin to end of goods; carry the rest of the goods around, under right arm, over left shoulder, about neck, over right arm; tuck in and hold in place by a three-inch belt. For head-gear use tall caps rather resembling a sugar loaf. Use heavy white canvas; this may be painted or fringed.

Try to use strong, bright colors, with white and black and brown. Avoid navy blue, turkey red, baby blue or pink. Try to use the same color-values.

SCENERY

A sea-blue curtain is the one essential.

NOAH'S WIFE

NOAH'S FLOOD

THE PEOPLE

Messenger of God.
Noah.
His Wife.
Shem.
Ham.
Japheth.
Wives of Shem, Ham, Japheth.
Idolaters.
Animals.

(The number and kind of animals must be left to the costumer. Where the animals mentioned in the play are left out, mention of them must be omitted.)

THE PLACE

Scene I. *The building place of the Ark.*
Scene II. *Mount Ararat.*

The Ark may be built on a framework of wood, covered with cloth to represent a child's toy. Bright colors are preferable, such as gray and scarlet. Or the Ark may be cut out of wall board. A door on hinges must be cut in the side, also a window. A gangplank may lead up to door. If the play is given indoors, a blue back-drop may be used against which colored lights may be thrown, to indicate storm. If given out of doors, a blue, smiling sky is always desirable.

Thin tarlatan may be cut in the shape, and painted to represent the rainbow, and stretched on a curved bit of wire.

THE PROPERTIES

A hammer and nails.
Fruit.
Pitchers and platters of food.
A rainbow.
An idol.
A few stones for altar.
Two doves or pigeons.
A Flood Curtain.

Trees, such as are seen in a child's Noah's Ark, may be cut out of wood and painted a vivid green. These will aid the picture.

NOAH'S FLOOD

(Taken in large measure from the play by Ranulf Higden of Saint Werburg's, Chester. A. D. 1299-1364.)

SCENE I. *The building place of the Ark.*

(*The three* SONS *of* NOAH *enter and work upon the ark with hammer and nails, or any building tools. Occasionally comes a distant cry of,* "Ho, ho! Ark-builders!" *They look up impatiently. Presently some impish* CHILDREN *run in.*)

FIRST CHILD (*jeeringly*): Ark-builders, ark-builders, where is your wit?

SECOND CHILD: Ark-builders, ark-builders, when do you flit?

(SHEM AND HAM *drop their tools and chase the children out, following them.* JAPHETH *continues his work at the door. Presently the children reappear, entering from the other side.*)

CHILDREN (*laughing merrily and pointing at ark*): Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!

(JAPHETH *goes inside and slams the door.*)

THIRD CHILD: Ark-builder, ark-builder, come out again.

CHILDREN: Ark-builder, ark-builder, where is your rain? (*They run out.*)

(NOAH *comes out of the door and looks anxiously up at the sky. The* MESSENGER *enters;* NOAH *bends prostrate.*)

MESSENGER:

God, who all this world has wrought,
Heaven and earth and all of naught,
Sees his people in deed and thought
  Are lost in sin.
Man that he made he will destroy,
Saving a few who are his joy,
  And have his servants been.
Noah, a righteous man thou be,
A ship hast thou ma-de me,
  Of trees dry and stout.
Three hundred cubits is it long,
And fifty broad to make it strong,
Of height fifty, lest it be wrong,
  Thus measure it about.
One window's made with skill and wit,
A cubit of length and breadth is it;
A door upon the side doth sit,
  For to come in and out.
Destroy-ed all the world shall be,
Save thou, thy wife and children three;
And their three wives also with thee,
  Shall live without a doubt. (*The* MESSENGER *goes.*)

NOAH (*rising and raising arms to heaven*):

O Lord, I thank thee; thou art kind,
That savest me from all man-kind.

A SON OF NOAH

(*Calls.*)

Haste ye, children; God doth call.
Hie ye, lest the water fall.
Shem, Ham, Japheth, come ye here!
Haste ye, haste ye, son-nes dear.

(JAPHETH *enters from within ark;* SHEM *and* HAM *enter shaking their fists angrily at* IDOLATERS *without, who mock and jeer.*)

IDOLATERS (*without*): Ho, ho! Ark-builders! Ark-builders, ho, ho!

SHEM:

Father, the people mock at us and jeer.
They say, "See Noah and his son-nes dear!
Where is the flood of which they have such fear?"

NOAH:

Aye, let them mock, for God hath said to me:
"*Thy* house shall live; the rest shall swallowed be
E'en in the mighty belly of the sea."

JAPHETH: But, father, art thou sure?

NOAH (*sternly*): Well? Sure of what?

JAPHETH (*hastily*:) Nay, nay, I see I'm wrong; I question not.

NOAH:

Doubt not, for God hath given a sign.
Now let your wives bring food and wine,
Water and fodder for the kine,
And work right busily.

(*All work busily. The* WIVES *enter carrying pitchers*

and platters of fruits. NOAH'S WIFE *enters leisurely, carrying a distaff, or a plate of fruit.*)

NOAH'S WIFE:

Noah, my husband, dost thou then believe
That the good God would so his children grieve,
And drown them all? Thou dost thyself deceive.

NOAH: I do believe it.

NOAH'S WIFE:

Nay, how comes it, when
The world is drowned that *we* be sav-ed then,
That we alone be saved of living men?

NOAH:

Because to no false gods we've bowed the knee,
Therefore God hath said to me:
"Thou and thy family shall sav-ed be."

NOAH'S WIFE:

And must our friends and all our kindred die?
I cannot save myself and hear their cry.
If they cannot be saved, no more will I.

NOAH:

Peace, woman, go within. (*Points sternly.*)

NOAH'S WIFE:

I will not go.

NOAH:

Then stand without and watch the waters flow.
Thou wilt be glad to enter soon, I know. (*She seats herself beside ark and munches apple or plies distaff.*)
Hark, what was that?

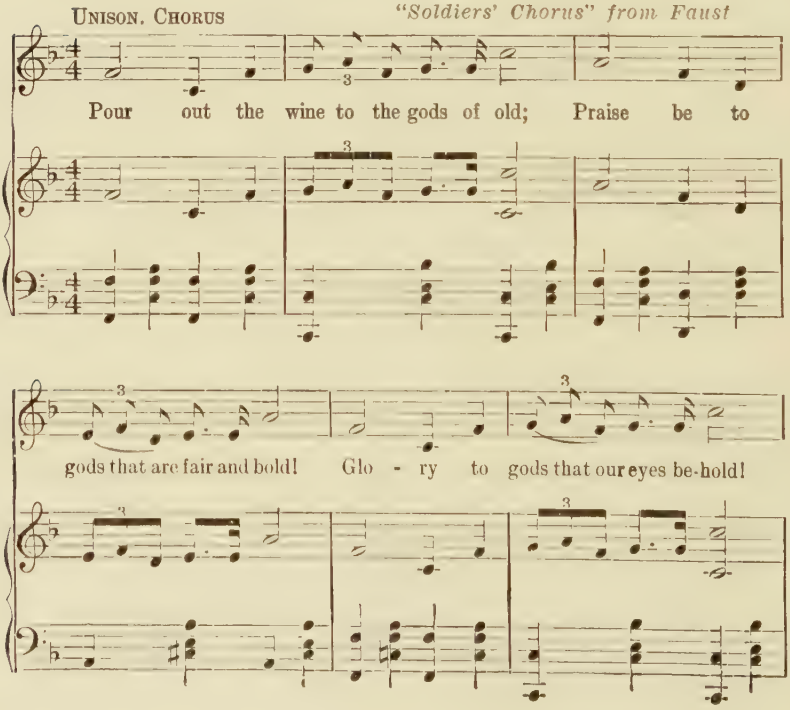
HAM (*sullenly*):

'Tis the idolaters; they make them merry
With worship of false gods—and all contrary
To the true God's command.

NOAH:

How long, O Lord, how long must we
Listen to this mockery?
O let the flood appear on sea and land!

(*Music. Enter the* IDOLATERS *carrying an idol of gold. They sing and dance about it.*)


UNISON. CHORUS
"Soldiers' Chorus" from Faust
Pour out the wine to the gods of old; Praise be to
gods that are fair and bold! Glo - ry to gods that our eyes be-hold!

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(*One* IDOLATER *pours out a libation of wine.* NOAH *strides forward and knocks over idol. The* IDOLATERS *huddle back.*)

NOAH: Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination to the Lord!

IDOLATERS: Sacrilege!

NOAH: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the stall! Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out!

SONS (*loudly*): Amen!

IDOLATERS: Woe! Woe! Woe! (*They surge forward.*)

FIRST IDOLATER: Upon them!

SECOND IDOLATER: Scatter them!

THIRD IDOLATER: Destroy them!

FOURTH IDOLATER: No! (*He pushes others back.*)
It is the old ark-builder. Very sad!
Cursing of other men hath made him mad.

WIFE OF NOAH'S SON

A MAIDEN (*holding out her hand to* JAPHETH):
Come, join in the dance;
Be glad and sing.
For the juice of the grape
Is a pleasant thing,
And hath sweet fragrance.
Be glad and sing.

(*The* IDOLATERS *start out,* JAPHETH *following.*)

NOAH'S WIFE: My son, and dost thou leave me?

NOAH:
Go thy ways.
Thou shalt repent thee before many days.

FIRST IDOLATER (*pointing upward mockingly*):
I see a cloud in the sky; it grows.
Perchance, it is your flood. Who knows?
Get into the ark lest it wet your toes.

ALL THE IDOLATERS (*laughing*): Get into the ark lest it wet your toes. (*They dance out with* JAPHETH.)

NOAH (*arms upraised*):
Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth,
For the hour of her desolation cometh! (*Turns to other sons.*)
Have done, ye men and women all,
Hie ye, lest the water fall.
Of clean beasts, seven shall be,
Of unclean, two; thus God bade me;
The flood is nigh, I plainly see;
Wherefore hasten ye,
And see now that each beastie be in stall.

(SHEM *and* HAM *go out.* NOAH *turns his back and laments*):

And Japheth hath forsaken me—my son!
O my son Japheth, O my son, my son!

NOAH'S WIFE (*mocking*):

Why dost thou grieve? The Lord hath promised thee,
Thou shalt be saved and all thy family.

NOAH (*turning*):

Yea, it is well, and God doth not deceive.
He will return again, I do believe.

HAM (*returns*):

The animals are in the ark,
Save those which Shem now bringeth. Hark!
Hear ye the roaring and the bark?

(*Loud roarings heard outside.*)

(*Enter* SHEM *with procession of animals.* HAM *aids him drive the animals. First of all enters a solitary* DRAGON.)

NOAH: Where is your mate, good Dragon? Tell me—where?

DRAGON (*with a mournful flap of his claw*):

She is eating up the village over there.
She bade me ask how many there would be
Within the ark?

NOAH: My sons, their wives and me.

DRAGON: I cannot add.

NOAH: In all there will be eight.

DRAGON (*mournfully*):

Alack, alack, good Noah, it is fate.

I fear she would not enter if she knew.
She eats a man a day; ye are too few.

WIVES (*to* NOAH, *with horror in their faces*): O father!

DRAGON:

Do not fear; too few ye be,
And eke too thin, to suit my wife and me. (*Crawls out.*)

SHEM (*bringing other animals up*):

Sir, here are monkeys, frogs and bears,
Kangaroos, giraffes and hares,
Elephants also in pairs. (*Goes out.*)

(*The* BEAR *sits down facing audience, and scratches his nose. The* MONKEY *runs away; he is brought back. The other* MONKEY *climbs on roof of ark and pulls the ear of* GIRAFFE *as that beast looks out of window. They drag the* ELEPHANT *in with great difficulty.* NOAH *counts off the animals as they enter.*)

NOAH:

Enter monkeys—frogs—bears—
Kangaroos—giraffes—hares—
Elephants also in pairs—
Stop! Stop! Too many rabbits far there be.

RABBIT (*one of a group of little white rabbits*): O sir, I only brought my family. (*Weeps.*)

NOAH:

Where are the lions? (*One* LION *stalks in;* WIVES *flee.*) Thou art late; turn ye, O LION; seek your mate.

(*Whereupon the* LION *shall turn to audience and roar*

A SON OF NOAH

until his mate shall run to him, and both shall enter the ark together.)

(*If so be that any child shall cry or whimper when he heareth the lion roar, then shall the lion remove his mask and say,* "Good child, be not afraid.")

NOAH:

Now all are in, I plainly see
The ark can nowise fuller be,
Save should my son return to me.

(JAPHETH *enters running.*)

JAPHETH (*kneeling*):

Lo, I have sin-ned against thee;
I pray forgiveness heartily,
And do repent me sore.

NOAH (*embracing him*):

Haste ye, haste ye, son-ne dear!
The sky grows dark; the flood is near;
And waters 'gin to roar.

(*The waters begin to rise. This may be shown by a painted curtain, by folds of green tarlatan or in any way the wisdom of the producer may suggest.* NOAH'S WIFE *begins to look uneasy and regards the sky.*)

NOAH: Good wife, wilt thou enter now?

NOAH'S WIFE (*hastily*): Yes, good Noah, yes, I trow!

(*She runs up gang-plank.*)

NOAH (*to sons*):

Draw the plank; make all fast.
The flood cometh quick at last.

WIFE OF NOAH'S SON

(*They draw up plank; then* SHEM *points to distance. Two* TORTOISES *enter, panting. With grins, the sons shove out the plank and* TORTOISES *enter ark. They close the door and window. Enter a* WOMAN *of the* IDOLATERS, *carrying a baby. She enters between the flood-curtain and the ark.*)

WOMAN (*cries*):
Good Noah, I repent me of my sin!
O ope the door, good man, and take me in!
O ope the door!

NOAH (*looking out of window*):
Call on your gods to lift you from the wave.
Are your gods helpless that they cannot save?

WOMAN (*holding up baby*): Yet save my child!

NOAH'S WIFE (*at the window*):
Yea, save the child we must;
For God is merciful as well as just.

NOAH:
Cry to the gods of gold to give release.
I am forbid to save you; go in peace.

(*He closes the window; she sinks with her child behind the waves. The water rises; those within the ark chant a psalm.*)

NOAH (*chanting*):
The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves;

ALL (*chanting*):
Above the noise of many waters,

And mighty breakers of the sea,
The Lord on high is mighty.

Scene II

Enter the Messenger. (*If the play is given in-doors, this may be omitted.*)

Messenger:

Although yon sky be peaceful and serene,
I pray you that the son-ne be not seen,
And that instead, ye hear the thunder's roar,
And lightning's flash, as ne'er ye've seen before,
And rains descend as ye shall see no more.

(Messenger *goes.*)

(Noah *opens window; there is a loud roaring.*)

Noah:

Peace! (*The noise stills.*)
Now forty days are fully gone,
Send a dove I will anon,
To see if aught of tree or stone
Be dry in any place.
And if this fowl come not again,
It is a sign God stops the rain,
And all is dry in hill and plain,
By God, his grace.
Go forth, O Dove, and quickly see
If this flood yet doth cease;
If so, return again to me
With the olive branch of peace. (*He lets dove loose.*)

Cries Within Ark: The dove! The dove!

THE ANIMALS LEAVE THE ARK

JAPHETH (*appearing at window*):
O father, in the east a dove is seen,
And in his bill, an olive branch, right green.

(NOAH *disappears within ark and returns, bearing dove and olive twig.*)

NOAH:
O Lord, blessed be thou for aye,
That us hath comforted this day,
And turned toward us thy face.
Yet once again, sweet dove, go forth,
To the east, west, south and north,
And find a resting place.
If thou come not again to me,
Then full plainly can I see
The flood is over by God's piteous grace. (*He sends dove forth again.*)

NOAH'S WIFE (*opening door*):
The dove returns not; it is gone for aye.
Let us go forth out of the ark, I pray.

NOAH:
Ah, Lord, honored must thou be.
All the earth's dry, I can see.

NOAH'S WIFE:
Son-nes, open wide the door;
See the plank be shoved ashore;
Lead the animals before
Right merrily.

FIRST SON'S WIFE (*beckoning others*):
Sisters, come; dance and sing!
The earth is all a-blossoming.

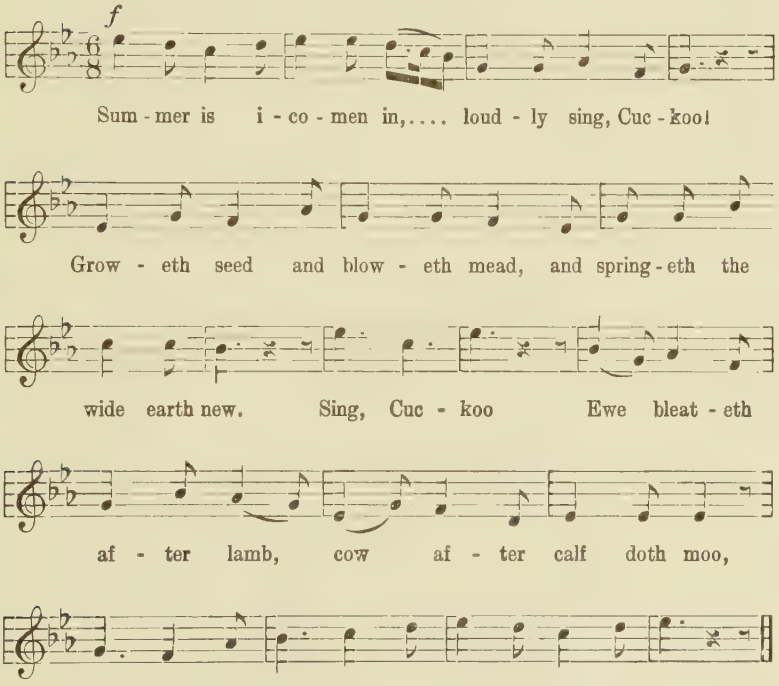
SECOND SON'S WIFE:
Sing and dance with glee and mirth;
For the floods have left the earth.

THIRD SON'S WIFE: Raise your voices with a shout:

ALL THREE WIVES: We're out of the ark at last! We're out!

(*The wives dance in a little circle and sing.*)

Song (OLD ENGLISH):


f
Sum - mer is i - co - men in,.... loud - ly sing, Cuc - koo!
Grow - eth seed and blow - eth mead, and spring - eth the
wide earth new. Sing, Cuc - koo Ewe bleat - eth
af - ter lamb, cow af - ter calf doth moo,
Bird greet - eth, ewe bleat - eth, loud - ly sing, Cuc - koo.

THE RAINBOW

NOAH (*scandalized, descends upon them*):

Peace! A psalm of thanks now raise,
Unto God with hymns of praise,
For his mighty and his wondrous ways. (*All gather about altar of stones.*)
Lord God in majesty,
That such grace hath granted me
Alone of mankind saved to be,
Therefore make I offering meet,
A sacrifice of savor sweet;
And let the incense mount unto thy heavenly seat.

(JAPHETH *brings a sacrifice;* NOAH *lays it on altar. If the play be out of doors, they offer it up by fire. Enter the* MESSENGER.)

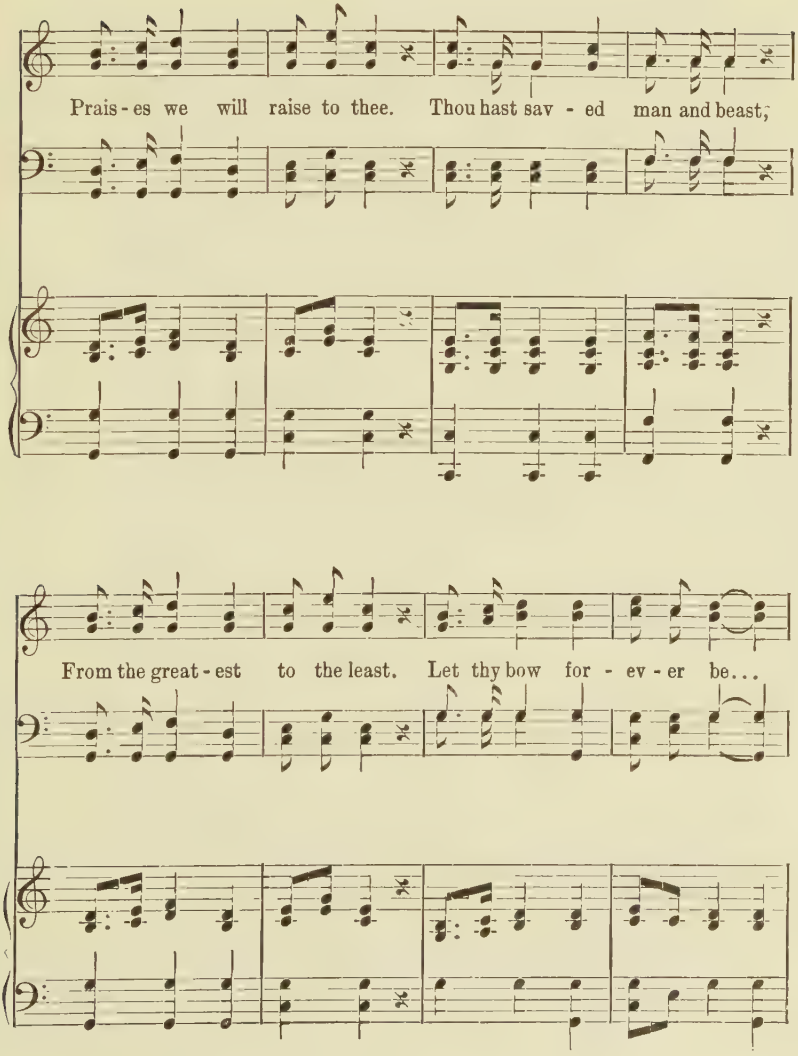
MESSENGER:

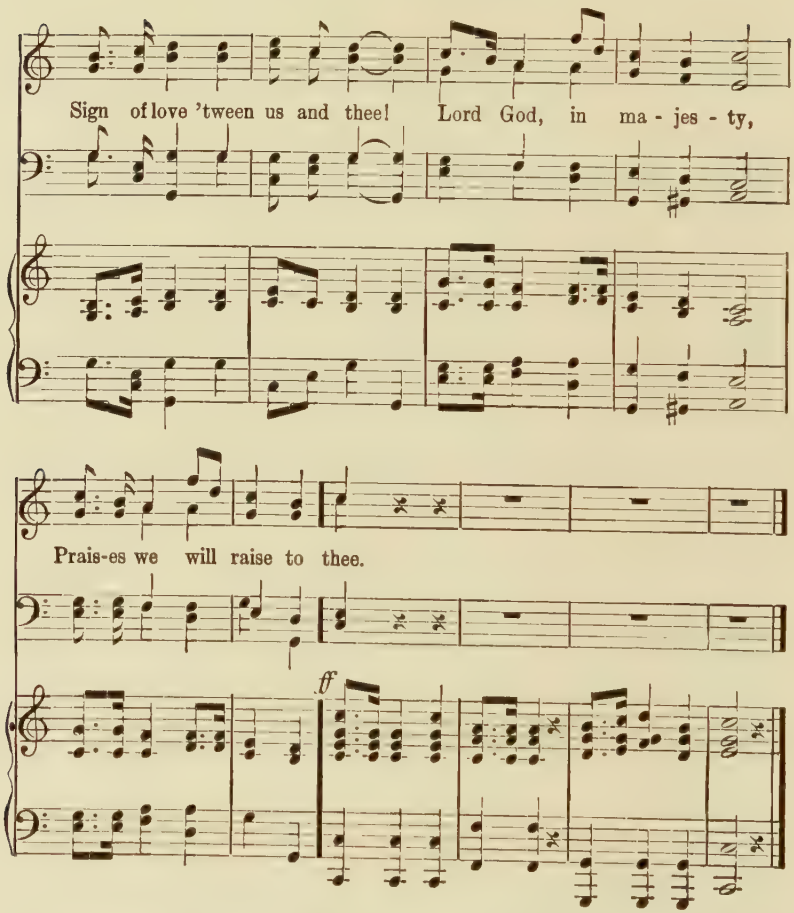
Noah, list ye God, his will:
To obey is better still
Than sacrifice; and thou hast God obeyed.
God doth promise now through me,
Never again a flood shall be.
Thou hast done in all things as he said.
My bow between you and me
In the firmament shall be;
By this token you shall see
That man and woman shall nevermore
Be wasted with water as hath been before.

(*Here let a rainbow appear in the sky.*)

Now when falleth fast the rain,
I will bring the sun again;
And this bow shall plain be seen
As token that my wrath and spleen
Shall never wakened be.
The bow-string is turned towards you;
And toward me is bent the bow.
That such weather shall be no mo'e,
I promise thee.
God's blessing, Noah, I give thee here (*Blesses him; all kneel*),
For vengeance shall no more appear.
And now farewell, my darling dear. (MESSENGER *goes.*)

Song: Music; "GAUDEAMUS"


Prais - es we will raise to thee. Thou hast sav - ed man and beast,
From the great - est to the least. Let thy bow for - ev - er be...



(NOAH, *his* WIFE, *his* SONS *and* SONS' WIVES *move slowly off. The* ANIMALS *form a circle and dance.*)

ABRAHAM

THE PROVING OF ABRAHAM

THE PEOPLE

Prologue and Epilogue.

Abraham.
Isaac, His Son.
The Messenger or Angel of God.
One or Two Servants.

THE PLACE

Scene I *is outside the tent of Abraham.*
Scene II *is Mount Moriah.*

The Prologue takes the place of scenery or program.

THE PROPERTIES

A chair or bench.
A bundle of wood.
A knife.

THE PROVING OF ABRAHAM

(*The* PROLOGUE, *or the* SERVANT *of* ABRAHAM (*acting as* PROLOGUE), *enters and bows low; then, drawing himself erect, points to imaginary scenery.*)

PROLOGUE: This is the tent of Abraham, the father of his people, where he lives with Sarai, his wife, and his son, Isaac, whom he loves above all else.

I am the servant of Abraham.

Lo, Abraham enters now with Isaac. (*The* PROLOGUE *goes.*)

(ABRAHAM *enters, leaning on* ISAAC.)

ISAAC (*pointing*): My father, behold the lambs yonder!

ABRAHAM: Aye, my son, they are for the sacrifice. I offer them up to God for a thank-offering that he hath given thee to me, O my son. (*Seats himself.*)

ISAAC (*clinging close to him*): Dost thou love me more than the little lambs?

ABRAHAM (*embracing him*): I love thee more than all that is in heaven or earth.

ISAAC (*struggling*): My father, let me go; I would go play with the lambs.

ABRAHAM (*releasing him*): Then go, my son.

(ISAAC *runs out.* ABRAHAM *remains seated; then suddenly he starts, rises, and stands with arms uplifted in prayer.*)

ABRAHAM: Here am I, Lord. (*He listens with strong emotion.*) O Lord, Lord, what is this thou dost require of me? Must I give up Isaac to thee, Isaac the joy of mine old age? (*There is a pause while he prays silently; then he speaks humbly.*) Nevertheless, not my will, O Lord, but thine be done. (*There is another pause; then he calls.*) Isaac! Isaac!

(ISAAC *runs in.*)

ISAAC: Here am I, father.

ABRAHAM: Get ye wood for a burnt-offering, and saddle ye the ass, for I will go up upon the mount to sacrifice.

ISAAC: Aye, father, and shall I go with thee?

ABRAHAM: Thou shalt indeed go with me, thou and the servant. Get thee gone. (ISAAC *runs out.*) Not my will, O Lord, but thine! O Lord, I will trust in thee.

(ISAAC *enters, carrying a bundle of fagots.*)

ISAAC: My father, all is ready. The ass is saddled, and I have here wood for the burnt-offering.

ABRAHAM (*placing his arm about him*): Come, my son. (*They go slowly out.*)

(*The* PROLOGUE *or* SERVANT *enters.*)

PROLOGUE: Behold, now Abraham and Isaac approach the mountains of Moriah. I, the servant, follow after. (*He follows them.*)

(ABRAHAM *and* ISAAC, *having made the circuit of the room, approach.*)

ABRAHAM: This is the mountain on which I shall sacrifice. (*To servant.*) Abide thou yonder with the ass. I and the lad will worship; then I will come again to thee. (*The* SERVANT *bows and withdraws.*)

ISAAC: My father?

ABRAHAM: Here am I, my son.

ISAAC: My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?

ABRAHAM: O my son, God will provide the sacrifice. (*Bends over him.*) O my son, before thou wert born I longed for thee, and since thou wast a little lad I have loved thee with a greater love than I have given my God. Now I am punished. For the Lord hath commanded me, saying: "Take thou thine son, thine only son whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and offer him up for a burnt-offering upon the mountains." O my son, I shall do even as the Lord hath commanded me, for all his ways are perfect. Fare thee well. (*He embraces him.*)

ISAAC (*fearfully*): Father—father—I—I fear—

ABRAHAM: Kneel thou upon the wood.

(ISAAC *kneels;* ABRAHAM *raises his knife to slay; a voice calls from distance.*)

VOICE OF MESSENGER: Abraham! Abraham!

ISAAC: Hark, O my father! A voice calls, "Abraham."

ABRAHAM (*with knife still raised*): Here am I, Lord!

(*The* MESSENGER *enters and stays* ABRAHAM'S *hand.*)

MESSENGER: O Abraham, thus saith the Lord: "Because thou hast put thy trust in me, therefore will I

deliver thee. Lay not thine hand upon the lad, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

ABRAHAM (*raising arms to heaven*): O Lord, blessed be the man that trusteth in thee.

ISAAC (*jumping up*): Lo, father, a ram is there, caught in the thicket. Lo, I shall fetch the ram for sacrifice. (*He runs out.*)

MESSENGER: Moreover, thus saith the Lord God: "In blessing, I will bless thee, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, for I have PROVED thee." (*The* MESSENGER *goes out.*)

(ISAAC *runs in with great excitement.*)

ISAAC: My father, the ram is caught; I will carry the wood yonder. (*Runs out.*)

ABRAHAM: O God, thou hast tried me and known me. O see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (*Goes with arms upraised.*)

(*The* SERVANT *or* EPILOGUE *advances.*)

EPILOGUE: Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. (*He goes out.*)

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

THE PEOPLE

Prologue and Epilogue. (The Prologue is introduced for clarity, where there is no scenery or program.)

The Baby Moses.
(Have a real, live baby.)
The Little Sister of Moses.
The Mother of Moses.
The Daughter of Pharaoh.
First Slave.
Second Slave.
Soldiers

THE PLACE

A marshy place by a river. If a little scenery is desired, take an old window-shade, sketch upon it reeds and cat-tails, and cut it so that when the little sister hides behind it she may appear to be looking through the reeds. The Prologue may unfold this as she speaks, and then hold it up so as to conceal herself.

THE PROPERTIES

A curtain of reeds (if desired).
An ark (a basket bound with reeds or raffia).
A piece of gold.
Two fans.
Spears for soldiers.

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

(*The* PROLOGUE *advances. She unfolds the curtain of reeds as she speaks.*)

PROLOGUE: This is Egypt. The wicked Pharaoh holds the children of Israel in bondage; but they are grown so many that he fears them. Therefore he has commanded that all boy babies be taken from their mothers' arms and put to death.

But the mothers seek to hide their babies.

Look and behold the marshy waters of the River Nile; tall reeds grow here; it is the hiding place one mother has chosen. See, she and the sister of the babe come now to hide him from the soldiers of Pharaoh. (*She raises the curtain of reeds above her head, or passes out.*)

(*Enter the little* SISTER *bearing the ark of bulrushes. She looks this way and that way; then she calls softly.*)

SISTER: Mother, this way! The wicked soldiers will not find him here.

(*The* MOTHER *enters bearing the* BABY.)

MOTHER: Is there no one in sight? (*She looks anxiously about.*)

SISTER: No one!

MOTHER (*embracing the child*): O my son, the cruel

Pharaoh would slay thee, but the Lord is gracious; he will save.

SISTER: Here is the ark of bulrushes; I have daubed it well with pitch. Shall I lay it among the flags at the river's brink?

(*The* MOTHER *nods. The* SISTER *arranges the coverings in the basket. The* MOTHER *hugs the child.*)

MOTHER: O my baby! (*She places child in basket.*)

SISTER (*peering into distance*): Mother, sh-h-h! I see the daughter of Pharaoh in the distance; she cometh to bathe in the river. Oh—if she should discover us!

MOTHER (*looking up anxiously*): God's will be done!

SISTER (*still peering out*): One of her maidens is a child of Israel, but the other is a proud Egyptian. See, now they stop to bathe.

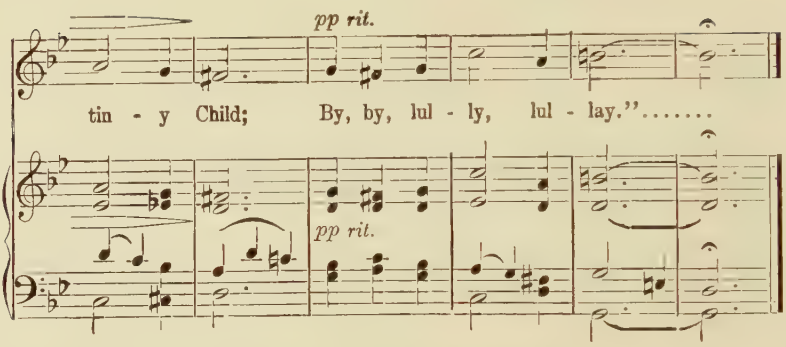
MOTHER (*rising from her knees*): I must return lest I be missed at home when the soldiers make the daily search for children; but do thou watch beside the child, and in the nighttime I will return with food.

SISTER: That will I, mother. I will hide in the tall reeds yonder. (*The* MOTHER *moves away;* SISTER *runs after her.*) But, mother, if they discover the babe, what must I do?

MOTHER (*earnestly*): Surely God will teach thee. Pray. (*She goes.*)

SISTER (*crouching beside ark*): O God, let no one hurt my little brother! O God, I pray thee. (*She sings a lullaby.*)

Lullaby, "Coventry Carol"



(*The* SISTER *looks up, startled, then flees behind the reeds as the* DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH *approaches, followed by* SLAVES *bearing fans.*)

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH: Come, maidens, we will rest by the river's brink, where the flag flowers grow. (*She approaches nearer.*) But what is that, floating upon the water?

EGYPTIAN SLAVE: Lady, it is a babe.

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH: Go fetch it, girl. No doubt it is one of the Hebrew children.

EGYPTIAN SLAVE: A Hebrew brat? I will not touch it, I!

(*The* DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH *raises her hand and strikes the saucy maid, as the other slave, the* MAID OF ISRAEL, *brings the babe.* (*Or kneels beside it.*)

SLAVE OF ISRAEL: O lady, see how beautiful!

EGYPTIAN SLAVE: Let it die, even as Pharaoh commanded.

SLAVE OF ISRAEL: O lady, let it live! Think how the

THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH NAMES MOSES

mother loved it. See how cunningly the ark is daubed with pitch and hidden here, 'midst the flag-flowers.

EGYPTIAN SLAVE: If you let it live, you let live one more enemy to Pharaoh.

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH: Hold thy tongue, girl. (*She looks doubtfully at child.*)

EGYPTIAN SLAVE (*exultingly*): Here come the guard of Pharaoh; they will see the babe and slay it. (*She points to distance. All look.*)

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH: What to do? Think, girl, use thy wits. (*To* SLAVE OF ISRAEL.)

(*The little* SISTER *rushes from reeds and kneels.*)

SISTER: O lady, lady, shall I go and call a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH: Go—go quickly. (*She looks apprehensively about.*)

EGYPTIAN SLAVE: The soldiers cross the river.

(*The little* SISTER *returns, followed by the* MOTHER.)

SISTER (*panting*): Lady, I have brought a nurse.

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH: Woman, take thou this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee wages. (*Gives a piece of gold.*)

MOTHER (*taking child*): Daughter of Pharaoh, may the God of Israel bless thee.

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH (*turning to go*): Fare thee well.

EGYPTIAN SLAVE (*cries*): The soldiers!

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH (*turning back*): Fear ye not.

(*All huddle behind her. She faces the* SOLDIERS *as they enter and salute.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: Daughter of Pharaoh, we make search for Hebrew children. One hath escaped us.

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH (*haughtily*): Who art thou to question me? Pass on.

SECOND SOLDIER: But—the babe yonder? (*Points.*)

DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH: Is the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. Pass ye by. (*She waves them away. They salute and go. She takes the child in her arms and embraces him.*) I love the child. (*She gives the* CHILD *to his* MOTHER *and turns to go; then she turns back.*) Call the child "Moses," for that means, "Drawn up out of the water," and remember he is dear to me for that *I* have saved him. (*She goes out followed by her maids.*)

(*The* MOTHER *and* SISTER *kneel with the* CHILD.)

MOTHER (*prays*): O God of Israel, bless thou this child, and as *thou* hast drawn him up out of the water, grant that he may be the means, through thee, to lift his people out of slavery. (*They rise and go.*)

(*The* EPILOGUE *folds curtain, advances to front of stage, and holds up hand.*)

EPILOGUE:

O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name:
Make known his doings among the peoples.
He sent Moses his servant,
And Aaron whom he had chosen.
And he brought forth his people with joy,
And his chosen with singing. (*The* EPILOGUE *goes.*)

A PAGE OF PHARAOH

UP, UP FROM EGYPT TO THE PROMISED LAND

THE PEOPLE

Pharaoh.
His Dead Son.
First Egyptian.
Second Egyptian.
Third Egyptian.
Page.
Moses.
Aaron.
Miriam.
The Children of Israel (acted by the Class).

THE PLACE

Scene I. *The palace of Pharaoh.*

Scene II. *The Red Sea shore.*

There is no actual change of scenery in this play, description serving the purpose.

THE PROPERTIES

A litter on which the dead son of Pharaoh is carried.
Moses' rod.
Miriam's cymbals.
Fan which the page carries over Pharaoh.
Spears for soldiers.

UP, UP FROM EGYPT TO THE PROMISED LAND

(*Enter* PHARAOH, *followed by* SOLDIERS *carrying the litter of his dead* SON. *The* EGYPTIANS *follow, then* MOSES *and* AARON.)

FIRST EGYPTIAN (*bowing low*): O Pharaoh, let the children of Israel go. Lo, there is mourning in the land of Egypt because thou keepest them in bondage. (*He points to the* SON *of* PHARAOH.)

EGYPTIANS: Woe, woe, woe! Yea, the god of Israel is a jealous god!

PHARAOH: O Moses and Aaron, evil have ye wrought in the land of Egypt, and accursed is the land while the children of Israel remain.

Rise ye, get ye forth from my people, lest your god smite us, and we be all dead men. (*He passes out followed by* SOLDIERS *carrying litter.*)

MOSES (*to* CHILDREN OF ISRAEL *or* CLASS): Ho, men of Israel! (*They stand.*) Pharaoh commands, "Cease ye the burden of Egypt!"

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL (*shout*): To God the glory! (*They rush into aisle.*)

AARON: Assemble ye your wives and little ones, your camels and your asses. God leads us to a land of milk and honey. On now to Canaan, to the promised land!

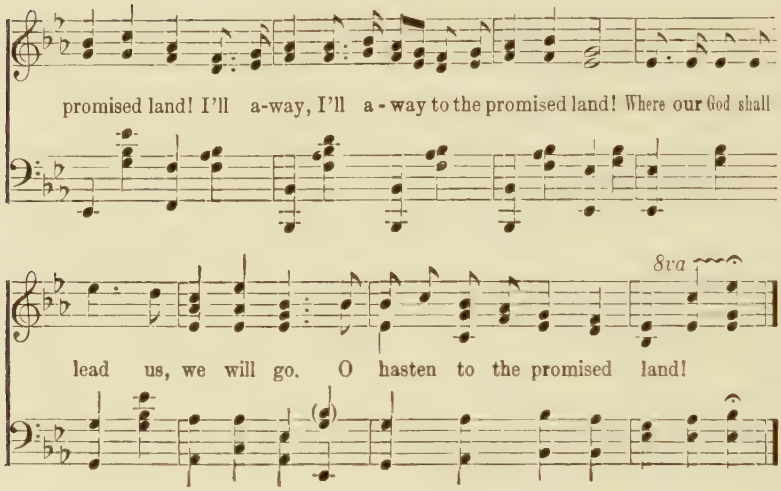
CHILDREN OF ISRAEL (*shout*): The promised land!

(AARON *leads; the* CHILDREN OF ISRAEL *follow;* MOSES *brings up the rear. They march toward the back of the room singing.*)

Song: "The Promised Land," by Unknown Author

(*Adapted*).

1. Up, up from E-gypt to the promised land! Up, up from E-gypt to the
promised land! Where our God shall lead us, we will go. O
CHORUS
hasten to the promised land! I'll a-way, I'll a-way to the


promised land! I'll a-way, I'll a-way to the promised land! Where our God shall
8va
lead us, we will go. O hasten to the promised land!

(*The* EGYPTIANS *watch with interest.*)

FIRST EGYPTIAN: A mighty army!

SECOND EGYPTIAN: Six hundred thousand strong!

THIRD EGYPTIAN: Pharaoh will rue the day when he let these slaves escape from the land of Egypt.

FIRST EGYPTIAN: There he cometh in mad haste.

(PHARAOH *enters followed by* PAGE *and* SOLDIERS.)

PHARAOH: Lo, it repents me that I have let Israel go. Let my soldiers go after them and scourge them back. On the Red Sea shore we will come up with them. On, my men, on!

(PHARAOH, *the* EGYPTIANS *and* SOLDIERS *rush down aisle after the* CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. *They, in the meantime, have made the circuit of the room, or church, and re-enter the stage, or chancel, singing.*)

Song: Same Music as before.

"Flowing with honey is the promised land;
Flowing with honey is the promised land.
Where our God shall lead us, we will go.
O hasten to the promised land!"

Chorus: As before.

AARON: Men of Israel, before us stretches the Red Sea water; here we will make our camp.

MIRIAM (*clutching his arm*): O Aaron, look! Behind us see the shining spears! Behind us cometh Pharaoh and his hosts. Where now is Moses?

AN ISRAELITE: And before, stretches the Red Sea water. How may we cross? Where now is Moses?

ANOTHER ISRAELITE: We shall be brought to Egypt again as slaves. Where now is Moses?

(MOSES *pushes his way through the people.*)

AARON AND OTHERS: O Moses, why hast thou thus dealt with us?

ANOTHER ISRAELITE: It were better for us to serve in the land of Egypt, than that we die here in the wilderness.

MOSES: Fear ye not. Stand still and see the salvation of your God. For the Egyptians which ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them no more forever. (*He stretches out his rod.*)

MIRIAM (*exultingly*): The Red Sea parts! The waves do mount on either side like giant cliffs, upheld by a monster hand. See how the waves do lash and foam! See! See!

MOSES: Forward, ye men of Israel!

(*They pass down the central aisle, singing.*)

Song: Same Music as before.

Through Red Sea waters to the promised land!
Through Red Sea waters to the promised land!
Where our God shall lead us, we will go.
O hasten to the promised land!

Chorus: As before.

(PHARAOH *and his men, having pursued the* CHILDREN OF ISRAEL *around the room, appear on the stage.*)

FIRST EGYPTIAN: O Pharaoh, thy soldiers have them in a trap. Before stretches the Red Sea water, and behind, behold thy shining spears!

PHARAOH: On, my men, on!

(*The* EGYPTIANS *and the* SOLDIERS *rush after the* CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. PHARAOH *and his* PAGE *remain.*)

PAGE: See, see, the Red Sea parts! The children of Israel walk on it dryshod. Verily, their god is God.

PHARAOH (*loudly*): Is their god more than I? Who is Jehovah? On, my men, on!

PAGE: Thy soldiers obey; thy army follows after through the sea. (*A pause of ten seconds while they peer into distance.*) The high waves tremble—O let thy soldiers haste! (*A pause of ten seconds. Then he cries, trembling and hiding his eyes.*) O lord, the waves! The waves!

PHARAOH: Waves, stand ye back! I, Pharaoh, bid ye stay!

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAIL THE PROMISED LAND

PAGE (*looking up*): They fall; they crush! Thy army, the waves go over them.

PHARAOH (*stretching out his arms*): O god of Moses, drive the sea apart!

PAGE (*promptly*): The god of Moses will not hear *thy* prayer.

PHARAOH: The Israelites exult.

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL (*in distance*):
Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Glorious in holiness—
Fearful in praises—
Doing wonders!
The Lord shall reign forever and ever.

MIRIAM (*with a clash of cymbals*):
I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.
This is my God and I will praise him,
My father's God and I will exalt him. (*Clash of cymbals.*)

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL:
Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Glorious in holiness—
Fearful in praises—
Doing wonders.
The Lord shall reign forever and ever. (*Clash of cymbals.*)

PHARAOH (*shaking his clinched fist*):
Mocked at by god and man!
I will raise me a mightier army and follow after.

I will pray to the gods of Egypt. (*He passes hastily out.*)

PAGE (*stretches out his arms to the departing Israelites*): O God of Moses, *I* will pray to thee. (*He goes slowly after Pharaoh.*)

THE CHILD SAMUEL WITH HIS PARENTS

THE CALL OF SAMUEL

THE PEOPLE

Prologue and Epilogue.
Eli the Priest.
Hophni, } His Sons.
Phinehas, }
Hannah.
Elkanah.
Samuel, Son of Hannah and Elkanah.
First Soldier.
Second Soldier
Third Soldier.

THE PLACE

Shiloh, before the door of the tabernacle.

PROPERTIES

A seven-branched candlestick (if feasible).
Two couches.
A jar of wine.
Spears and shields.

THE CALL OF SAMUEL

(*Enter the* PROLOGUE.)

PROLOGUE:

This is the story of the call of Samuel.
The scene is Shiloh, before the door of the tabernacle.
Lo, there entereth Eli, priest of Israel. (PROLOGUE *withdraws.*)

(ELI, *the old priest, enters, and stands praying.*)

ELI: O Lord God, turn thou my sons, I pray thee, from their evil ways. Lo, they come yonder, full of wine and drink, a disgrace to mine old age.

(HOPHNI *and* PHINEHAS *come swaggering in, arm in arm. One has a jug of wine; he drinks and hands it to the other.* ELI *raises a trembling hand toward them.*)

HOPHNI: Hi there, old man, art going to chide again?

PHINEHAS (*mockingly*): Do not show anger, for anger doth not become a man of God.

ELI: My sons, why will ye tempt the Lord your God? Turn from your evil ways and pray. (*Lays a hand on* HOPHNI.)

HOPHNI (*jerking away*): I pray not, I! Thou hast ever said the Lord was slow to anger.

ELI: Yea, but the cup of your iniquity is full; and I—I suffer in your fall.

THE PRIEST ELI REBUKES HIS DRUNKEN SONS

PHINEHAS (*laughs mockingly*): Ah, so? The iniquity of the children shall be visited upon the fathers? Eh? Well, who is responsible if not the father? Come, Hophni, come where it is merry.

HOPHNI (*eagerly*): Yea! (*They go out singing and taking turns at jug.*)

ELI (*raising his arms despairingly to heaven*): O God! God! (*Passes out.*)

(*Enter* HANNAH, *followed by her husband*, ELKANAH. *She is weeping.*)

ELKANAH (*imploringly*): Hannah, why weepest thou? And why is thy heart so grieved? If it be because thou hast no son, grieve not. Am I not better to thee than ten sons?

HANNAH: Ai, my husband, the women mock me that I have no child. (*She kneels and prays silently.*)

(ELI *enters and observes her in wonder, for silent prayer was unusual.*)

ELI: Woman, what ails thee?

HANNAH (*rising*): Ah, sir, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit; I pour out my soul before the Lord.

ELI: Give me to know thy sorrow.

HANNAH: I prayed unto the Lord that he would look upon the affliction of his handmaid, and give unto me a man-child. If he do so, then will I give the child unto the Lord all the days of his life.

ELI: A man-child? Nay, ask more. Ask that he grow in the grace and love of God, else will the gift be one of sorrow.

HANNAH: Ah, sir, that shall be *my* task—to lead him in the love of God.

ELI: Ai, 'tis there that *I* have failed. (*He raises his hands and blesses her.*) Go thou in peace, and the Lord grant thy petition.

HANNAH (*bowing*): May thy servant find grace in thy sight. (*She and* ELKANAH *go.*)

ELI (*prays*): O Lord God, O let this, thy servant, find grace in thy sight. Forgive thou the iniquity of my sons. For who shall follow after me, O Lord? Who shall be judge of Israel, if not my sons? Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give unto me an answer of peace. (*He bows his head and passes out.*)

(*The* PROLOGUE *reenters.*)

PROLOGUE: Now many years have passed. Eli is still the priest and judge of Israel, though he is blind; and his sons continue still in evil. Yonder come Hannah and her husband to give thanks for the gift of the child Samuel, and to give him to the Lord. (PROLOGUE *goes.*)

(*Enter* HANNAH *and* ELKANAH *leading the child* SAMUEL.)

HANNAH (*caressing child*): See thou, this is the very spot on which I prayed the prayer which brought me thee.

SAMUEL (*roguishly*): God heard thy prayer, and sent thee a little son to boast of. (*He smiles up at her.*)

ELKANAH (*rumpling* SAMUEL'S *hair*): Nay, an imp of mischief!

(ELI *enters, groping blindly.* SAMUEL *regards him in amaze.*)

SAMUEL: There cometh the priest in raiment. (*He shrinks away.*) Ai! Why walketh he in such fashion?

HANNAH: He is become blind. (*She advances to him.*) Sir—O Eli—

ELI: Woman, thy voice is known to me—and yet—who art thou?

HANNAH: O sir, I am that woman who stood here praying, these many years ago. For a child I prayed, and the Lord hath granted my petition. (*She leads* SAMUEL *to* ELI, *who passes his hands delicately over the child's head.*) Therefore I also have given the child to the Lord. As long as he liveth he is granted to the Lord. (*She turns to* SAMUEL.) Kneel thou, my son, before this holy man and beseech him to take thee into the service of the Lord.

SAMUEL (*pulls* HANNAH *away and puts his lips to her ears*): Hark'ee, dear mother, I would fain go home with thee again.

HANNAH: Nay, little son, night approacheth; we must leave thee.

ELKANAH: Come, say, "Farewell." (SAMUEL *goes to him.*)

HANNAH (*prays, as though facing the altar of the Lord*):

My heart exulteth in the Lord;
My horn is exalted in the Lord.

The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich;
He bringeth low; he also lifteth up.
For by strength shall no man prevail.
The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth;
He shall give strength unto his king
And exalt the horn of his anointed.

(*She turns, embraces the child, then bows before* ELI.) O Eli, priest of God and judge of Israel, the Lord be with thee.

(HANNAH *and* ELKANAH *go.*)

ELI (*sits on couch and beckons to* SAMUEL): Come hither, lad. (SAMUEL *goes to him reluctantly.*) What do they call thee?

SAMUEL (*sniffling*): Samuel, master.

ELI: Samuel? And what hath thy mother taught to thee?

SAMUEL: She hath taught me that the Lord Jehovah is one God, and there is none beside him, that I must love him and speak truth always.

ELI: And what else—if there be aught beside?

SAMUEL: She bade me serve and follow in thy steps.

ELI (*musing*): Follow in my steps? Come, thou shalt serve these blind eyes and quench the candles. (*Omit this if there are no candles.*) (*While* SAMUEL *puts out the candles,* ELI *muses.*) Follow in my steps? Shall it then be this lad, and not my sons, who shall rule Israel? Come, little lad, thou shalt lie here the night. (*He motions to couch on which he sits.* SAMUEL *lies down.* ELI *kneels as though before altar.*) O

God, God, would that my sons were pure as is this child! Yea, I have reared my sons in folly; now I reap the punishment thereof. Lo, what shall be the end? (*He falls silent.*)

(*There is a pause; then* SAMUEL *half rouses and listens. He runs to* ELI.)

SAMUEL: Here am I, master, for thou calledst me.

ELI: Nay, my son, I called thee not; lie down again. (*He reclines on other couch.*)

SAMUEL (*after a pause of about twenty seconds, again runs to* ELI): Here am I, master, for thou calledst me.

ELI: Nay, my son, I called thee not; lie down again.

SAMUEL (*lies down for twenty seconds; then he half rises and looks bewildered*): He *did* call me, he *did!* he *did!* (*He crosses to* ELI.) Here am I, master, for *truly* thou didst call me.

ELI: Not I! (*He reflects.*) It is the Lord, who speaketh to *thee* and not to *me*. Alas, I have not the open vision. Go, lie down, and it shall be if he call thee, thou shalt say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

(SAMUEL *lies down; presently he rises and kneels.*)

SAMUEL: Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

(*There is a pause while* SAMUEL *listens.* ELI *turns toward him eagerly, then calls.*)

ELI: Samuel, my son! (SAMUEL *goes to him slowly.*) What is this thing the Lord hath spoken to thee? I pray thee, hide it not.

SAMUEL (*reluctantly*): He said—he said—the Lord hath said: Behold, I will judge the house of Eli forever, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. Master, what did he mean?

ELI (*slowly and mournfully*): It is the Lord! Let him do what seemeth unto him good. (*He raises his arms to heaven.*)

SHOUTS OUTSIDE: News! News for the priest!

ELI: What meaneth the noise of this tumult?

(THREE SOLDIERS *run in.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: O Eli, servant of God, woe unto thee!

SECOND SOLDIER: O Eli, be strong, and hear the news we bring.

FIRST SOLDIER: Israel hath joined battle with the Philistines; Israel was smitten before the Philistines.

SECOND SOLDIER: We brought the ark of the covenant to save us: It was thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who carried the ark.

THIRD SOLDIER: And there was a very great slaughter —And thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas—

FIRST SOLDIER
SECOND SOLDIER } The Lord hath slain them!

(ELI *trembles and falls backward; the* FIRST *and* SECOND SOLDIERS *support him.*)

THIRD SOLDIER: Lo, ye have slain him with your evil tidings.

SAMUEL (*runs to* ELI *lovingly, and kneels before him, embracing him*): O my dear master! (*A pause, then he rises and turns to the soldiers.*) Bear him hence between you. (FIRST *and* SECOND SOLDIERS *lead him out.*) (*To* THIRD SOLDIER.) Grieve not; ye have not slain him, but he is smitten of the Lord. For the Lord, he came unto me in a vision of the night, saying, I will smite the house of Eli forever, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves and he restrained them not.

(FIRST *and* SECOND SOLDIERS *return.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: Alas, alas, who now shall judge our people?

THIRD SOLDIER (*seizes* SAMUEL *and raises him aloft*): Behold the judge who shall rule Israel.

(*The* SOLDIERS *pass out, bearing* SAMUEL *and shouting, "Huzza!"*)

(*The* EPILOGUE *advances.*)

EPILOGUE: Hear ye the words of the preacher, how he said: Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right. Bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. (*The* EPILOGUE *passes out.*)

DAVID

DAVID AND GOLIATH

(The Story of a National Hero and a National God.)

THE PEOPLE

The Prophet Samuel.
Jesse the Bethlehemite.
Eliab,
Abinadab,
Shammah,
Nathaneel,
Raddai,
Ozem,
Elihu,
David,
Jesse's Sons.
Daughter of Jesse.
Saul, King of Israel.
Two Attendants, One of Whom is Armor-bearer.
First Messenger.
Second Messenger.
The Princess Michal.
Her Women.
Prince Jonathan.
Challenger for Goliath.
Goliath of Gath.

Israelites and Philistines

THE PLACE

Act I. *A field near Jesse's home in Bethlehem.*

Act II. *A field near the pavilion of Saul.*

(*The same blue curtain, or out of doors, will do for both scenes.*)

THE PROPERTIES

A horn of oil for the Prophet Samuel.
A sword and horn for Eliab.
A platter of food for Daughter of Jesse.
A harp, a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, a slingshot for David.
Helmet, spear and shield for Armor-bearer.
Pebbles for attendant to give David.
Sword and shield for Challenger.
Horn and spear for First Messenger.
Horn and spear for Second Messenger.
A crown of flowers for Michal.

For the head of Goliath take a fierce-looking mask; attach it to helmet. Sew long swaggering locks of hair on either side, and a sweep of red cloth at back. So, when David removes mask from Goliath's face, in cutting off his head, the red cloth will give the whole a solid appearance.

If possible, have a harp for the music.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

ACT I. *A field in Bethlehem, near the home of* JESSE.

(*Enter* ELIAB, *polishing his sword. He practices fighting an imaginary enemy. Presently he turns and calls.*)

ELIAB:

Ho, David, tend my sheep for me;
I make me ready to fight the Philistines.
And see thou that no lion enter in,
Else 'twill go hard with thee.

(*The sounds of a shepherd's pipe, or of a harp are heard, receding in the distance.* JESSE *enters and speaks mildly and with remonstrance.*)

JESSE:

My son, this night the first new moon arises of the new year;
My son, this night we feast,
And make our sacrifices on God's altar.
My son, first be thou reconciled with thy brother David.

ELIAB (*impatiently*): I have done him no wrong.

JESSE:

Thou and thy brothers are too harsh with him.
He is a tender lad; be thou more gentle. (*Lays hand on* ELIAB'S *arm.*)

ELIAB (*shaking off hand*): He is a babe, fit only to tend sheep.

JESSE: Where hast thou sent him?

ELIAB: To the hillside, away from Bethlehem.

JESSE: Where are thy brothers?

ELIAB: They make them ready to fight the Philistines.

JESSE: Who tendeth their sheep?

ELIAB (*sullenly*): David.

JESSE (*with mild sarcasm*):

And if a bear or a lion attack the flocks,
The little David is alone;
While his brave brothers abide here in safety.
He perchance fighteth, while they make them *ready*.

ELIAB (*sneers*):

Thou ever didst make much of David.
The very name of "David" means "beloved."

JESSE:

Nay, all my sons are equal in my love.
But David—he is indeed a gentle lad. (*He turns as though to go out. Left.*)

(*The* PROPHET SAMUEL *enters slowly from the right.*)

ELIAB:

My father, who comes there?
Nay, *there,* through the budding barley?
The old man with so lofty a bearing?

JESSE:

Mine eyes are dim. (*He shades them and peers out. Suddenly he speaks.*)
My son, it is the prophet Samuel.
What can his coming bode of good or evil?
Haste, haste, my son.

(*They advance to meet the prophet, bowing low.*)

JESSE:

O Samuel, O mouthpiece of the Lord,
Comest thou in peace to Bethlehem?

SAMUEL: In peace!

JESSE: Make us to know thy will.

SAMUEL: Thou art Jesse, the Bethlehemite?

JESSE: Thou hast said it.

SAMUEL:

I am the mouthpiece of the most high God.
For the Lord spake unto me, saying:
Mourn not over King Saul;
For I repent me that I made Saul king over Israel.
Fill thine horn with oil and go;
I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite;
For I have provided me a king among his sons.

JESSE: *A king!*

ELIAB: *A king!!*

JESSE:

Eliab, wind thy horn and call thy brothers;
And bid thy sister bring both meat and wine
To set before our guest.

(ELIAB *runs out to the left, winding his horn. He passes several of his brothers who are entering, and points out the prophet.* JESSE *motions* SAMUEL *to a seat in the center.* SAMUEL *sits. The* DAUGHTER *of* JESSE *enters with food and drink, which* SAMUEL *rejects.*)

SAMUEL:

And now make thou thy sons to pass before me,
That I may choose.

(ELIAB *enters with other brothers.* ABINADAB *slips beside his sister and eats the food. The* DAUGHTER *stands beside her father, at right of* SAMUEL.)

JESSE:

My sons, pass ye in order of your years,
Before this man of God.

(ELIAB *advances and kneels.* SAMUEL *rises and regards him uncertainly.*)

SAMUEL: Surely the Lord's anointed is before me.

ELIAB (*triumphantly*): Ah, father, art so ready now to chide me?

SAMUEL: Nay, pause, my son, for the Lord hath said unto me:
Look not on a man's countenance,
Nor the height of his stature;
For the Lord seeth not as man seeth.
For man looketh on the outward appearance,
But the Lord looketh on the heart.
Thy heart is proud, and thou shalt not be king.

(ELIAB *passes with hanging head to the right.* ABINADAB *advances.*)

ABINADAB: And I, sir, look on me.

SAMUEL:

The Lord rejects thee,
For thou art a wine-bibber and a glutton.

(ABINADAB *swaggers defiantly over to* ELIAB, *who grins at him.* SHAMMAH *bows low and speaks slyly.*)

SHAMMAH:
Sir, if thou crown *me* king,
I'll make thee rich in the spoils of the Philistines.

SAMUEL (*briefly*): The Lord rejects thee for a thief and robber.

(SHAMMAH *shrugs and joins others.* NATHANEEL *advances.*)

NATHANEEL:
Make me king, sir,
And I will drive out the Philistines,
And all men shall bow down to the God of Israel.

SAMUEL:
The Lord rejects thee, for thou boasteth thyself,
And sayest thou canst do much,
When thou canst do little.

(NATHANEEL *passes angrily to right.* RADDAI *advances.*)

RADDAI (*cunningly*):
Thou wilt anoint me, Samuel;
For lo, the Lord came unto me in the night watches,
Saying, Awake, awake, thou shalt be king of Israel.

(*The brothers stare angrily at him.*)

SAMUEL: The Lord rejects thee, for thou art a liar.

(*The brothers double up with mirth.* RADDAI joins *them, shaking his fist at* SAMUEL. OZEM *advances and bows meekly.*)

OZEM:

For me, I would not be the king in Israel,
Except the Lord command.

SAMUEL (*praying*): Lord, give me light! (*Then he motions* OZEM *away.*) Thou art not the chosen one.

(OZEM *joins others.* ELIHU *advances triumphantly.*)

ELIHU:

O mouthpiece of the most high God, behold *me!*
I am the last.
Anoint me, and let the oil run down to the hem of my garment!
Anoint me, for I shall be a mighty king over Israel.

DAUGHTER OF JESSE (*starting forward*):

O brother, thou hast forgotten little David. (*Turns to* SAMUEL.)
O sir, if thou despiseth these, my brothers,
O let me show thee David. 'Tis the youngest,
And the best loved by me.

(*The brothers surge forward angrily.*)

ELIAB AND OTHERS: No, no! He is a babe—a child —a—

SAMUEL (*waves them back and turns to* JESSE):

Are all thy children here?
Or hast thou another son?

JESSE:

There remaineth yet the youngest;
And behold, he keepeth the sheep.
He is my dear-beloved.
His years are yet too tender to rule Israel.

DAUGHTER OF JESSE: O let me go and bring him!

SAMUEL:

Send and fetch him;
For we will not sit down till he come hither.

(*The* DAUGHTER OF JESSE *starts running out toward left.*)

JESSE: Nay, daughter, blow the horn till he appear. (*She blows horn.*)

SAMUEL:

Speak not of his tender years;
For the Lord knoweth the times and the seasons.

(*She blows horn.*)

Neither will he cause the flower to blow on the seedling;
Nor the fruit on the sapling;
Nor an old head on young shoulders.

(*She blows horn.*)

(*There is a pause while all listen; then she blows again.*)

DAUGHTER OF JESSE: He cometh, for I hear his harp in the distance.

(*The song is heard, beginning faintly, but growing stronger.* DAVID *enters on the last two lines.*)

Song: "The Lord is My Shepherd," Music by S. Liddle.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

SAMUEL (*advancing to meet him*):
O sweet singer of Israel,
The Lord commandeth me, Arise, anoint him; for this is *he*.

(*He raises his horn of oil.* DAVID *kneels.* SAMUEL *pours oil upon him.*)
For the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth:
And he shall give strength unto his king,
And exalt the horn of his anointed.

DAUGHTER OF JESSE (*embracing David*): O David, I *am* glad.

JESSE: Come now to the feast.

(*All pass out but* DAVID *and his sister. She waits for him as he stands in prayer.*)

DAVID:
O God, thou hast anointed me with the oil of gladness,
Above my fellows.
I will sing a song unto thee, O God;
Upon a psaltery of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

(*He takes his harp and sings.*)

Song: Music, Continuation of Psalm.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

(*He passes slowly out while singing the last lines followed by his sister.*)

Act II

(Saul's *pavilion in the Israelite encampment. The scene takes place just outside the pavilion, where may be placed a couch for the king. To the right is the army of Israel; to the left, the army of the Philistines, and the road to Bethlehem. Sound of trumpets to the left.*

(King Saul's Attendants *run in, from right, shading their eyes and peering into distance.* Soldiers *follow.*)

Attendant (*cries*): King Saul! Go summon the king; the king must know.

(*An* Attendant *runs back.*)

(*Shouting from the left. A* Messenger *runs in blowing his horn.*)

Messenger: News for King Saul! Where is the king? The king?

(*Trumpets on the right. Enter* King Saul *and his* Armor-bearer. *The* Messenger *rushes to him and kneels.*)

Messenger:
O my lord, I bear news:

The Philistines with their thousands approach;
They gather themselves together,
And there is none to withstand them.

SAUL:

Cursed be the day I was born,
Or ever the Lord anointed me king over Israel!
For a sickness is fallen upon me,
And I know not where to look for help. (*He advances to couch and rests.*)

ATTENDANT:

Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.
Let my lord now command his servant to seek out a man who is a cunning player on the harp, and it shall come to pass when the evil spirit is upon thee, that he shall play and sing, and thou shalt be well.

SAUL:

Do so.
For I would hear of peace, and not of war.

ATTENDANT:

Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, David, a shepherd lad, that is cunning in playing.
He is called "The sweet singer in Israel."

SAUL:

Take thou this word to Jesse. Say to him:
"Send me David, thy son, who is with the sheep."

ATTENDANT: Lord, I obey. (*He bows and goes.*)

MESSENGER:

O king, there be three young men, sons of Jesse,
Who came but now to serve 'gainst the Philistines.

SAUL: Go, bring them hither.

(*The* MESSENGER *goes out, left. At the same moment there is a loud shouting from the left, and the* SECOND MESSENGER *runs in.*)

SECOND MESSENGER: News! News for the king!

SAUL: Hither, man! Speak!

SECOND MESSENGER:

O king, I bear evil tidings:
For every thousand Israelites,
There are ten thousand Philistines.
And there is none to withstand them.

SAUL: Go ye and summon the warriors of Israel.

(SECOND MESSENGER *goes out to right. Gradually the* SOLDIERS *of* ISRAEL *enter and group at back. The* FIRST MESSENGER *reenters with the three elder* SONS OF JESSE.)

FIRST MESSENGER: Here are the sons of Jesse, lord.

SAUL:

Come nearer, men. (*They stand before him.*)
And are ye sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite?

ELIAB: Yea, O lord king!

SAUL:

Is one among you called by the name of "David,"
Or "The sweet singer in Israel"?

ELIAB:

Nay, lord king,
For we be men and warriors;
But David is a little shepherd lad.

SAUL: But shepherd lads must needs defend their flocks.

(*The* ATTENDANT *enters with* DAVID.)

SAUL: How now, returned so soon?

ATTENDANT:
I met him, lord.
He came but now to see his brothers there. (*Nods toward them.*)

ELIAB (*angrily*):
What do you here?
And why art thou come down?
And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?
I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart;
Thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

DAVID:
My father bade me seek thee with this loaf,
And flask of wine. (*Offers them.* ELIAB *turns angrily away, but* ABINADAB *accepts and eats.*)

SAUL:
Peace, men!
And art thou he that's called "The sweet singer in Israel"?

DAVID: My lord, I—I—

SAUL: Be not ashamed, but sing thou sweetly to me.

DAVID: What shall I sing?

SAUL: Of peace and pleasantness and quiet ways. (*Reclines on couch.*)

DAVID (*sings as before*):
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

SAUL (*to attendant*):
Go, bid the Princess Michal bring a crown
To crown his brow.
For he *is* the sweet singer of Israel. (ATTENDANT *goes out.*)
Sing yet again.

DAVID (*sings continuation of psalm*):
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For thou art with me:
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

(*The* ATTENDANT *enters from right and is followed by the* PRINCESS MICHAL *and her slave girls bearing fans.*)

ATTENDANT (*announces*): The Princess Michal!

SAUL:
Come thou, Michal, here,
And crown the sweetest singer in all Israel.

MICHAL (*bowing*):
My father, as thou biddest! (*She turns to* DAVID.)
Sir, I crown thee,
The sweetest singer in all Israel. (*Crowns him.*)

(*Loud shouting to the left.* PRINCE JONATHAN *enters running.*)

JONATHAN:

Where is my father? O my father, hear:
The army of the Philistines is at hand.
And thy people fear, O father.
For lo, one of the Philistines,
A champion among them,
And a giant for strength,
He sendeth a challenge to the people of Israel.

SAUL: Admit the challenger.

(*Enter from the left the* CHALLENGER *of* GOLIATH *of* GATH. *He surveys the people sneeringly.*)

CHALLENGER:

Give ear, O ye Israelites,
Hear the words of Goliath of Gath:
"Choose ye a man for your champion
And let him come down to me.
If he be able to fight with me and kill me,
Then will we be your servants;
But if I prevail against him,
Then shall ye be our servants and serve us.
I defy the armies of Israel this day."

(*The* ISRAELITES *sway forward murmuring:* Ho! Indeed! Swaggerer!)

SAUL: We will consider. Go! (*The* CHALLENGER *goes.*)

JONATHAN:

This challenge hath been cried before the army,
And none is found who dare hope for the victory.

SAUL:

Perchance a champion for Israel is here. (*Beckons.*)
Ho, sons of Jesse, ye are come to fight;
Ye are big men.
Which one of you will fight 'gainst this Philistine?
(*There is a pause: all look on ground.*)
Unto the champion who kills Goliath,
The king will give great riches.
And to that man the king will give his daughter.
(*There is another pause.*)

ELIAB (*uncertainly*):

I fear, lord king,
For if I fail, then Israel is doomed to servitude.

ABINADAB: I am not strong.

SHAMMAH: I am not yet full-grown.

DAVID (*steps forth*):

Let no man's heart fail because of him.
Thy servant will go and fight with the Philistine.

(*Laughter and derision from his brothers. Smiles from others.*)

SAUL: Thou art but a youth, and he a man of war.

DAVID: Thy servant kept his father's flocks, and when there came a lion or a bear and took a lamb out of the flock, I went down after it and killed it.

ELIAB: O foolish one!

ABINADAB: Back to thy sheep!

SHAMMAH: Thou braggart!

DAVID:

The Lord delivered me out of the paw of the lion,

And out of the paw of the bear;
He will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine.

SAUL:

Go, and the Lord be with thee.
And take my armor and my sword and shield.

(*The* ARMOR-BEARER *advances and offers weapons.*)

DAVID:

I have not proved them.
But give me rather five smooth stones from the brook;
Thus will I fight.

SAUL: Go, bid the champion of the Philistines come.

(*The* FIRST MESSENGER *goes out left.* MICHAL *goes to* DAVID.)

MICHAL:

O shepherd,
O sweet psalmist of Israel,
O do not let the giant get too near!
Be careful, David. Jonathan, go with him.
And come back safe to Michal. God go with thee.
(*She goes out.*)

(DAVID *stands as though in prayer, while everyone sings very softly the following lines:*)

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For thou art with me:
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

(*Or, merely the music may be played.*)

(*The* ATTENDANT *brings stones to* DAVID.)

(*Enter the* CHALLENGER *for* GOLIATH *followed by Philistines.*)

CHALLENGER:

Tremble, O people of Israel,
For Goliath cometh.
And the champion of Israel will fall down before him
As barley before the sickle.
Tremble, O Israelites!
Have ye a champion?
Have ye a man to stand before him?

(DAVID *stands forth.*)

CHALLENGER: Ha, ha, ha! Is Goliath a babe, that thou sendest forth an infant against him?

DAVID:

He cometh against me with a sword and spear;
But I come against him in the name of the God of the armies of Israel,
Whom he hath defied.
Come forth, Goliath, for thou diest this day.

ELIAB (*to* DAVID): O lad, I fear for thee; I'll take thy place.

DAVID:

Be not afraid.
Though I be little, I've the strength of ten.

ISRAELITES:

Huzzah! Huzzah!
Though he be little, he's the strength of ten.

DAVID (*cries*): Come forth, Goliath!

(GOLIATH, *a heavy man, enters like a lion loosed from*

THE CHALLENGER FOR GOLIATH

his cage. He brandishes his sword, and attacks DAVID. DAVID *dodges and flees;* GOLIATH *follows him, hacking the air with his sword. Again* DAVID *dodges and runs to a sufficient distance to use his sling.* GOLIATH *crashes to earth.* DAVID *runs and stands over him, seizes* GOLIATH'S *sword and cuts off his head.*)

(*The* CHALLENGER *and other* PHILISTINES *flee, crying, "Woe! Woe!"*)

ISRAELITES: Huzzah! Huzzah! Huzzah!

DAVID (*holding up* GOLIATH'S *head*):

Give ear, O ye people,
O ye Israelites, and O ye Philistines:
For so shall all they triumph
Who put their trust in the Lord!

ISRAELITES (*shout*):

For so shall all they triumph
Who put their trust in the Lord!

FIRST MESSENGER (*with wild enthusiasm*): Where now are the Philistines?

ISRAELITES: They are fled.

SAUL: Proclaim through Israel the mighty tidings.

(*The* SECOND MESSENGER *takes* GOLIATH'S *head from* DAVID, *and repeats the tidings three times, standing at center, at right and at left of stage. While he speaks the* SOLDIERS *remove* GOLIATH.)

SECOND MESSENGER (*blowing horn*):

Give ear, O ye people:
Slain is Goliath of Gath by the shepherd, David.

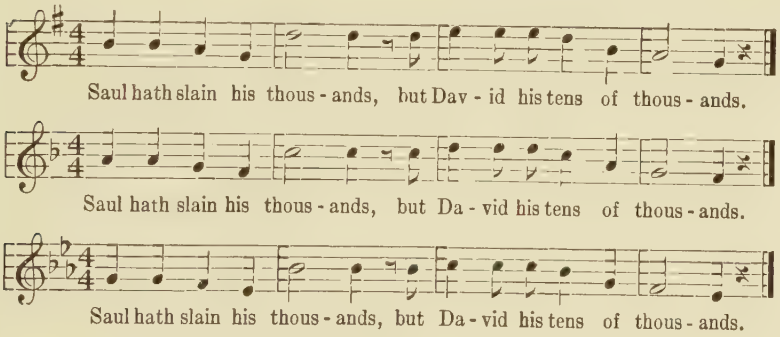
And so shall all they triumph
Who put their trust in the Lord.

JONATHAN (*goes affectionately to* DAVID):
O David, thou who art to me as a brother,
I, Jonathan, prince of Israel, ask thy friendship.
Take thou my robe in token of my love.

DAVID:
O Jonathan, I am but a shepherd of the sheep,
But I return thy love. (*They exchange shepherd skin and velvet.*)

(*Enter* MICHAL *and her dancing women, with cymbals. They chant as they dance.*)

CHANT:


Saul hath slain his thous - ands, but Dav - id his tens of thous - ands.
Saul hath slain his thous - ands, but Da - vid his tens of thous - ands.
Saul hath slain his thous - ands, but Da - vid his tens of thous - ands.

(*Repeat three times in three different keys.*)

SAUL (*angrily*):
Peace, women!
Ye ascribe unto David ten thousands,
And to me ye ascribe but thousands.
What more can he have but the kingdom?

MICHAL (*runs and kneels before him*): O my father, be not wroth at my song.

SAUL (*wearily*):
I have sworn thee to the man who slew Goliath;
And that which the king sweareth will he do.
David, I give thee Michal for thy wife. (*He turns away.*)

DAVID: The king's daughter within the palace is all-glorious.

MICHAL (*smiling upon him and extending her hand*):
O David!
But see, my father is wroth at my song.
Come and sing *thou* to him.
And so shall he forget the mighty warrior,
In listening to the sweetest singer in all Israel.

(*She runs to* SAUL, *who is reclining on couch.*)
Father, would'st hear again the shepherd's psalm?

SAUL (*heavily*):
Yea, for I have a sickness, daughter;
And the song is verily one of delight.

(MICHAL *leans beside* SAUL *as* DAVID *sings.*)

DAVID (*sings*):
The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For thou art with me:
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil:
My cup runneth over—

SAUL (*rises threateningly*):
What sayest thou?
Who hath anointed thy head with oil?

DAVID:
O king, the prophet Samuel, sent of God!
O king, one day I shall be king of Israel.

(SAUL'S *head sinks on his breast. He passes slowly out, followed by his* ATTENDANTS.)

DAVID (*sings*):
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

(*All turn to go, singing*):
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life.
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

(Longer Version)

THE PEOPLE

A Wicked Judge.	King Solomon.
First Woman.	Page.
Second Woman.	First Soldier.
The Baby. (A *real* Baby.)	Second Soldier.
Dancing Children.	A Boy.

THE PLACE

Gibeon, where Solomon comes to offer sacrifice.

A judgment seat is raised two steps above the floor, a little to the left of the room. From each side of the judgment seat extend walls, three or four feet high, to the front corners of the room. These walls may be black or white or yellow or terracotta cloth, stretched. Against the walls paste or pin or paint some bold design, such as diamonds, in a contrasting color, white against black; deep sea-blue against terracotta. Or use the conventional lotus design. For the background use a deep sea-blue curtain and throw a blue light upon it.

THE PROPERTIES

Several gold pieces.
Palms for children to carry in dance.
A silver basket piled high with oranges.
Rolls of parchment for the Judge.
A trumpet.
Two spears.
A large sword.

THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

(*The* WICKED JUDGE *is seated on the High Place, judging the two women. The* FIRST WOMAN, *at his right, holds the* BABY. *The* SECOND WOMAN *kneels at his left, with imploring gestures.*)

WICKED JUDGE (*with a sweep of his hand*): No more! No more, I say! I will hear no more. Am I not judge in the king, his place? (*Points at* FIRST WOMAN *sternly.*) *You* say yonder woman's child died in the night-time, and she wants yours. (*Points at* SECOND WOMAN.) *You* say—stop sniveling—(SECOND WOMAN *shrinks away from him.*) You say 'twas *her* child died and that she hath stolen *your* child. *I* say, if you had minded your brats properly, there would not be this to-do. (*A pause.*) What were you doing when one of you stole the other's child? Gadding about the streets? Eh?

SECOND WOMAN: O sir, sir, she stole him while I slept.

FIRST WOMAN: Most gracious Judge, I did not steal.

SECOND WOMAN (*turning on her*): But thou did'st!

WICKED JUDGE: O you women! Lo, all the troubles of this kingdom flow from this, that women do not properly observe the affairs of their households. As King Solomon remarks, with rather more wisdom than he usually manifests, "Who can find a virtuous woman?"

BOTH WOMEN (*together*): Sir! Most gracious Judge! Only hear me—

WICKED JUDGE (*crashing his fist down*): Silence! *Silence!!* (*To* SECOND WOMAN.) Where are your witnesses?

(SECOND WOMAN *makes an imploring and hopeless gesture.*)

WICKED JUDGE (*fiercely*): What? No witnesses? Be off! Be off, I say. (*He waves both women away; then his voice changes.*) Stay, wait—I had forgot. I must—er—consider the welfare of the infant. (*To* SECOND WOMAN.) It may be *thou* wouldest be the better guardian. Hast thou the means to feed and clothe the child, and—er—pay all needful fees?

SECOND WOMAN: I am poor, but, sir, I am the mother.

WICKED JUDGE: Pshaw! Pshaw! (*Turns to* FIRST WOMAN.) And thou?

FIRST WOMAN (*producing gold pieces*): I have these bits of gold. (*Her voice takes a mocking inflection.*) Most gracious Judge, it may be thou, of thy great kindliness, wilt guard the gold for me, for I, alas, am but a weakling woman, and my child needs all my care.

WICKED JUDGE (*pocketing gold*): Ah, yea, yea, thou art indeed the rightful mother. (*Raises his eyes to heaven.*) More is a child to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold. I will indeed look after thy gold for thee. Now get ye gone. (*Turns crossly to* SECOND WOMAN.) And count thyself lucky that I do not call the guard, and have thee cast into prison for bearing lying witness.

(A BOY *rushes in, shouting as he runs.*)

BOY: Ohé! Ohé! King Solomon, he entereth now the city. He cometh here to offer sacrifice; the children dance before him. Ohé! Ohé! (*He runs out.*)

WICKED JUDGE (*gathers up his rolls of parchment, shrugging*): I will not bow before him, I! And he but a beardless youth! (*Passes out.*)

(*The* SECOND WOMAN *crouches low, weeping and praying;* FIRST WOMAN *regards her.*)

FIRST WOMAN (*laughing*): Pray, aye, pray! The child will call *me* "Mother." He will throw his little arms about my neck and hail me. For three pieces of ruddy gold have I bought him, and thy prayers shall never win him from me.

SECOND WOMAN (*fiercely*): As there is a God in Israel, to whom men pray, I yet shall have my child.

FIRST WOMAN: A God in Israel? (*Shrugs.*) As there is god-head in gold, which men worship, lo, I shall keep thy child. (*She makes a sweeping bow and passes out.*)

SECOND WOMAN: O God, God, give me my child, my son. Thou knowest the child is mine, thou knowest, *thou* knowest. Thou sawest when in the dark of the night-time she crept into my chamber and stole him from me. She cradleth him, and I am desolate.

SHOUTS WITHOUT: King Solomon! King Solomon, all hail! Hail to King Solomon, the son of David!

(*The* SECOND WOMAN *looks about wildly, then crouches in a dim corner. The* CHILDREN *enter dancing; they carry palms; they sing.*)

Song: "Hail to the Monarch" (Cantata of Esther)

ff
Hail to King Sol - o - mon, ev - er vic-
to - ri - ous! Sing - ing, we praise him and fall at his feet.

(*Enter* KING SOLOMON, *followed by two* SOLDIERS *and* PAGE.)

SOLOMON (*raising his hand in blessing*): My children, I thank you for your love. Now get ye gone, for I would offer sacrifice alone.

First Child: But we have learned a psalm of David thy father, to do thee reverence; may we not say it?

First Soldier: Do ye not hear the king? (*Threatens them.*)

Solomon: Nay, let the little ones come hither. The psalms of David, my father, are dear unto me. Now, babes, speak up.

Second Child (*to* First): Do thou begin.

First Child:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful;

Second Child:

But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Third Child:

And he shall be like a tree, planted by rivers of water,
That bringeth forth his fruit in due season;

Fourth Child:

His leaf also shall not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.

Fifth Child:

The ungodly are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

All the Children:

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous:
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

SOLOMON: I thank you. (*He turns to* SIXTH CHILD.) And why hast thou not spoken with the others?

(*The* SIXTH CHILD *reaches a tiptoe and whispers in his ear.*)

SOLOMON: Thou hast learned something more; then speak, little one.

SIXTH CHILD:

O king, a word fitly spoken,
Is like apples of gold in baskets of silver.
And the king that faithfully judgeth the poor,
His throne shall be established forever. (*She presents basket of oranges.*)

SOLOMON (*in great delight*): Ha, whose words are those?

SIXTH CHILD (*with a demure courtesy*): Your Majesty's!

SOLOMON: Well done! Well spoken! I shall strive indeed to be a king whose judgments shall be like apples of gold in baskets of silver.

SIXTH CHILD (*to others*): Come now; the king would be alone.

SOLOMON: The Lord be with you!

CHILDREN: And with thee also, O thou son of David! (*They courtesy and go.*)

SOLOMON (*ascends to High Place and prays*): O Lord God of my fathers, thou hast showed unto my father,

David, great mercy according as he walked before thee in uprightness of heart; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child. I know not how to go out nor come in. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

(*There is a pause during which the* SECOND WOMAN *rises slowly and approaches* SOLOMON. *She kisses the hem of his robe. He turns and regards her with astonishment. She rises and speaks prophetically.*)

SECOND WOMAN: O king, because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast thou asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked understanding to discern judgment, behold, God will give unto thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee; neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

SOLOMON: Who art thou? for it was thus I heard the words of God speaking to my heart! Who art thou?

SECOND WOMAN (*prostrating herself*): The least of thy servants! A grain of dust by the roadside!

SOLOMON: Why art thou come here to the Hall of Judgment?

SECOND WOMAN: I came hither for justice; but thy judge in Gibeon is as the chaff which the wind beareth away—

SOLOMON (*sternly*): Beware how thou speak evil of them in authority. (*Then he smiles.*) I gather that the case went against thee. What hast thou lost? Fear not; I will requite thee. (*He offers her gold.*)

SECOND WOMAN: O lord king, my loss was not of gold.

SOLOMON: What then? Of land? Lo, I will give to thee a bit of land, hard by a spring of water—

SECOND WOMAN: O lord king, I have lost no rood of land.

SOLOMON: Speak then thy sorrow.

SECOND WOMAN: O lord king, God gave unto thy father David a little son to sit upon his throne. Speak, was thy father glad?

SOLOMON: Yea, verily, he rejoiced with great rejoicing.

SECOND WOMAN: And thy mother, Bathsheba, was her heart likewise merry?

SOLOMON: My father rejoiced, but his rejoicing was naught in the measure with my mother's joy.

SECOND WOMAN: She would have grieved had'st thou been stolen from her?

SOLOMON: What mother would not? But, woman, to thy tale—

SECOND WOMAN: My tale is told. O son of Bathsheba,

God hath given to thee an understanding heart. Let it read my sorrow; give me back my child.

SOLOMON (*bewildered*): Woman, I have not thy child.

SECOND WOMAN: Nay, but thy judge in Gibeon, for gold he hath rendered false judgment; for gold, he hath given my child to another woman.

SOLOMON: Thou canst prove this? (*She makes a despairing gesture of denial.*) (SOLOMON *claps; the* SOLDIERS *enter.*) The court of justice was held here this morn? (SOLDIER *bows.*) Bring hither the case of the child and the two women. (SOLDIERS *salute and go.* SOLOMON *speaks sternly to the* WOMAN.) If thou speakest truly, the child shall be given thee: but if thou hast sought to move me by a lying tale—; lo, I shall punish thee so thou shalt wish thou never had'st been born.

SECOND WOMAN (*regarding him steadfastly*): I have no fear, for God hath given to thee an understanding heart.

(*The* JUDGE *waddles in.*)

WICKED JUDGE: What's this? What's this? My lord the king desired me? (*He sees the* WOMAN.) Aha! Now I understand. This woman hath filled thy ears with lying tales. Lord king, the woman is mad—

SECOND WOMAN (*indignantly*): I am *not* mad.

WICKED JUDGE (*blandly*): Mad, I say, mad! Deeming her mad, I have excused what otherwise I had—er—severely punished.

SECOND WOMAN: I am not mad.

WICKED JUDGE: She claims the child of another woman. (*He taps his brow significantly.*) What her game is, I know not, but she saith, I am corrupt, and thou but a beardless youth. She saith God hath given thee a kingdom, but not the wit to rule it. Ha, ha!

(SOLDIERS *enter with* FIRST WOMAN *and* CHILD.)

SOLOMON (*turning furiously to* SECOND WOMAN): Didst thou say this?

(*The* SECOND WOMAN *pays no attention to him; she is devouring the child with her eyes. She holds out her arms yearningly.*)

SECOND WOMAN: O my dove, my fair one! (*She turns to* SOLOMON.) Look, behold my baby! See his little leg—; lord king, behold his dimples. His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks; his cheeks are as a bed of spices; yea, he is altogether lovely. And he is *mine*. (*She turns with pride to the* KING, *but shrinks away as she sees his anger.*)

FIRST WOMAN (*advancing to High Place*):

King Solomon, all hail!
Thou wisest of all judges!
Thou canst read the hearts of men;
Thou understandest the language of beasts and birds;
Lo, I bare my heart to thee.
Read thou!
I lay my child before thy feet;
Judge thou! (*She places child at foot of step.*)

SOLOMON: Guard, take the child. (SECOND SOLDIER *lifts the child stiffly.*) (*To* FIRST WOMAN.) Is this thy child?

First Woman: God *knows.*

Solomon: Aye, but I would likewise know. Hath neither woman a witness?

Wicked Judge (*brusquely*): Pshaw! Nonsense! There is no doubt at all, O mighty son of David. I have examined witnesses; they swear the child is *hers.* (*Nods toward* First Woman.) Moreover, she hath the child; possession witnesses. (*Pats* First Woman.) Fear not, my girl; the king will do thee right.

Second Woman: O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house. And this woman's child died in the night; and she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid her dead son beside me. And when I arose in the morning, the child was dead; but when I had considered it, behold, it was not my son.

First Woman: Nay, but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son.

Second Woman: Nay, but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son.

Solomon (*sternly*): Women, approach. (*Both stand before him. To* First Woman.) Thou sayest, "This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead." (*To* Second Woman.) And thou sayest, "Nay, but thy son is the dead, and mine is the living." (*To* Soldier.) Bring hither a sword. (First Soldier *goes out.*)

Wicked Judge: Lo, what is in the king's mind? Will he slay yonder woman for bearing lying witness?

(SOLOMON *raises his hand with a threatening gesture;* JUDGE *shrinks back.* FIRST SOLDIER *returns with sword.*)

SOLOMON: I cannot judge between you; let God judge. (*Turns to* SOLDIER.) Take thou the sword; divide the living child in twain, and give half to the one and half to the other.

(*The* FIRST WOMAN *shrinks away. The* SECOND WOMAN, *with a little cry, rushes between the* SOLDIER *who holds the* CHILD, *and the* SOLDIER *who holds sword. She stands with fists doubled, to defend the* CHILD. FIRST SOLDIER *throws her aside; she falls.*)

WICKED JUDGE: O clever judge! O mighty son of David!

FIRST WOMAN (*kneeling*): I bow, lord king, to thy decree. Let the child be neither mine nor hers, but divide it.

SECOND WOMAN (*throwing herself before* KING): O my lord, my lord, give *her* the child, give her the *living* child, and in nowise slay it! Let the child live, even though it be within her arms, lord—lord—

WICKED JUDGE: O clever judge! Ha, ha, ha! Through thee indeed the Lord hath spoken! Who would have thought to see such mighty wisdom, yea, in a beardless youth? Thy wit hath showed the truth, and made yon lying woman eat her lies. (*Taps* FIRST WOMAN.) Even as I said, the child is hers. (*To* SOLDIER.) Give unto this woman her child.

FIRST SOLDIER (*with sword upraised*): Is it thy will, O king, I slay the child, or give it to yon woman?

SOLOMON: It is my will (*he bends and raises* SECOND WOMAN *gently*) thou give unto *this* woman the living child, and in nowise slay it; for she is the mother thereof, because she loveth much. For love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can floods drown it.

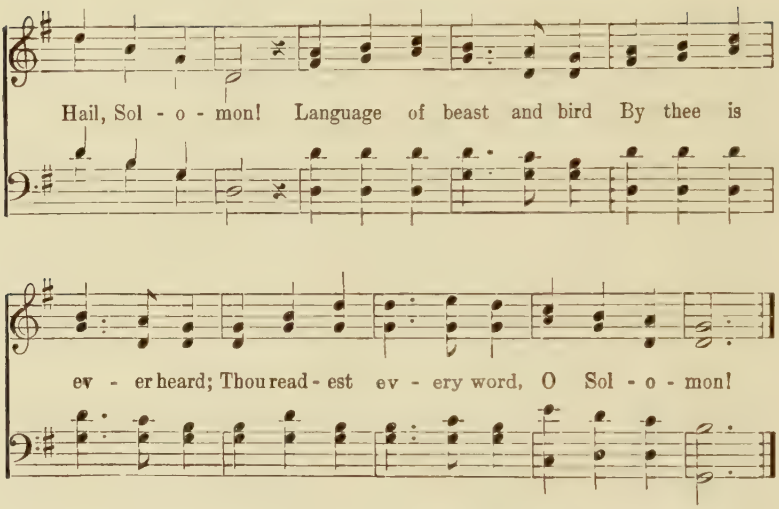
WICKED JUDGE (*sourly*): Humph!

SECOND WOMAN (*receiving* CHILD, *radiantly*): He that ruleth over men righteously, that ruleth in the fear of God, he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds, when the tender grass springeth out of the earth through clear shining after rain. King Solomon, all hail!

ALL: King Solomon, all hail!

(*All pass out singing.*) (*If desired, the earlier song may be repeated.*)

Song: Music, "Ancient Days"


Hail, Sol - o - mon! Language of beast and bird By thee is
ev - er heard; Thou read - est ev - ery word, O Sol - o - mon!

THE CHILDREN

THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

(Shorter Version)

THE PEOPLE

A Herald.
First Soldier.
Second Soldier.
Dancing Children.
King Solomon.
First Woman.
Second Woman.
Baby. (A *real* baby.)

THE PLACE

Gibeon, where Solomon comes to offer sacrifice.

THE PROPERTIES

Palms, or branches for children to carry in dance
A silver basket piled high with oranges.
A trumpet.
Two spears.
A large sword.

THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

(*The* HERALD *enters, followed by two* SOLDIERS. *The* HERALD *blows his trumpet; the two* SOLDIERS *flourish their spears.*)

HERALD: Make way, make way; he entereth now the city! Way for King Solomon, the son of David!

SOLDIERS: Way for King Solomon, the son of David! Way! Way! (*They take positions, one on the right hand and one on the left.*)

FIRST SOLDIER (*conversationally*): He cometh hither for sacrifice, they say.

SECOND SOLDIER: Aye, and to render judgment.

FIRST SOLDIER: Is it true, think you, that he is wiser than all men that have gone before him?

SECOND SOLDIER (*shrugs*): So men say. As for me, I shall judge for myself.

FIRST SOLDIER (*poses mockingly*): O King Solomon, King Solomon, little thou thinkest that the while thou art judging others, a mightier shall judge thee!

SECOND SOLDIER (*prodding* FIRST *with spear*): Be still, thou ass; he cometh.

(*The* SOLDIERS *stiffen to attention as the* CHILDREN *enter dancing and singing.*)

Song: Music, "Hail to the Monarch." (See Longer Version.)

(Cantata of Esther)

(*Enter* KING SOLOMON *followed by* TWO WOMEN *and* BABY, *also by* PAGES *and more* SOLDIERS *if desired for effect. The* CHILDREN *bow low.*)

SOLOMON (*lifting his hand*): The Lord be with you!

ALL: And with thee also, O thou son of David!

CHILD (*offers silver basket of oranges*): O king, a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold, in baskets of silver, and the king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established forever.

SOLOMON (*in delight*): Ha! Who said that?

CHILD (*courtesies demurely*): Your Majesty!

SOLOMON: Well done! Well spoken! I shall strive to be indeed a king whose judgments shall be like apples of gold in baskets of silver. (*He turns to altar and prays.*) O Lord God of my fathers, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father, and I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or to come in. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge this, thy so great a people?

(*While he prays the* FIRST WOMAN *creeps forward and kisses the hem of his robe.* SOLOMON *turns and regards her with wonder. She rises.*)

FIRST WOMAN: O king, because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked understanding to discern judgment, behold God will give to thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there

was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

SOLOMON: Who art thou? For it was thus I heard the word of God ringing in my heart. Who art thou?

FIRST WOMAN (*prostrate*): The least of thy servants —a grain of dust by the roadside.

SOLOMON: Why art thou come—here to the Hall of Judgment?

FIRST WOMAN (*rising*): O my lord, I and this woman (Indicates WOMAN with BABY.) dwell in one house, and her son died in the night-time, and she arose at midnight and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid her dead son beside me—

SECOND WOMAN (*insolently*): She lieth, lord king.

FIRST WOMAN: When I arose in the morning the child was dead, but when I had considered it, behold, it was not my son.

SECOND WOMAN: Nay, but the living is *my* son, and the dead is *thy* son.

SOLOMON (*regards both silently for a few seconds*): Women, approach! (*Both women stand before him.*) *Thou* sayest, "This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead," and *thou* sayest, "Nay, but thy son is the dead, and mine is the living." (*To* SOLDIER.) Bring hither a sword. (SOLDIER *goes.*)

HERALD (*with curiosity*): What is in the king's mind? Will he slay yonder woman for bearing lying witness?

(FIRST SOLDIER *returns with sword.*)

SOLOMON: I cannot judge between you; let God judge. (*To* SOLDIER.) Take thou the sword; divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half unto the other.

(*The* SECOND WOMAN *crosses hastily to the left as though to flee; the* FIRST WOMAN *darts between her and the* SOLDIER *and stands ready, with clinched fists, to defend the* BABY. *The* SECOND SOLDIER *throws her aside and takes the* BABY *from the other woman.*)

HERALD (*laughing*): O clever judge! O mighty son of David!

SECOND WOMAN (*bowing low*): I bow, lord king, to thy decree. Let the child be neither mine nor hers, but divide it.

FIRST WOMAN (*with a little panting cry, throws herself before* SOLOMON): O my lord, my lord, give *her* the child, give her the *living* child, and in nowise slay it. Let the child live, even though it be within her arms—lord—lord—

HERALD: O prince of wisdom! Through thee indeed the Lord hath spoken. Who would have thought to see such mighty judgment, yea in a beardless youth? Thy wit hath showed the truth and made this lying woman eat her lies.

CHILDREN (*swarming about* SECOND WOMAN *and bowing to her*): Hail, mother of the child!

FIRST SOLDIER (*raises sword and crosses to* SECOND SOLDIER, *who holds* BABY): Is it thy will, O king, I slay this child, or give it to yon woman? (*Indicates* SECOND WOMAN.)

SOLOMON: It is my will (*he raises* FIRST WOMAN *tenderly*) thou give unto *this* woman the living child, and in nowise slay it; for she is the mother thereof, because she loveth much. For love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can floods drown it.

FIRST WOMAN (*eagerly receives* BABY *and cuddles it*): O king, he who ruleth over men righteously, who ruleth in the fear of God, he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds, when the tender grass springeth out of the earth through clear shining after rain. King Solomon, all hail!

ALL (*raising palms*): King Solomon, all hail!

(*All pass out singing the children's song.*)

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

THE PEOPLE

PROLOGUE AND EPILOGUE. (The same.)
FIRST THIEF.
SECOND THIEF.
THIRD THIEF.
THE JEW.
FIRST SERVANT.
SECOND SERVANT.
THE PRIEST.
FIRST LEVITE.
SECOND LEVITE.
THE GOOD SAMARITAN.
THE HOST.

THE PLACE

A lonely road with an inn in the distance. If the play is given indoors, any door may represent the inn.

THE PROPERTIES

Three sticks or cudgels for the thieves.
A wine bottle, packet of food, and cloak for Jew.
Huge empty boxes, covered with bright cloth and bound with heavy cord for the servants to carry.
If the illusion of night-time can be carried out, have the Samaritan carry a lanthorn on a stick, and have the Host appear, wearing a nightcap and carrying a candle (electric candle).
A cloth to bind the wounds of the Jew.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

(*If this play be given out of doors, the thieves must conceal themselves in the shrubbery before the play begins; if indoors, they may conceal themselves in corners, or creep in.*)

(*Enter the* PROLOGUE.)

PROLOGUE: And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said unto him, What is written in the law?

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

And Jesus spake unto them this parable. (*The* PROLOGUE *draws to one side and stands watching the action of the parable.*)

(*The* THIEVES *pop their heads out of the shrubbery and advance cautiously.*)

FIRST THIEF: Hark'ee, brothers, I have sure word that one of our profession is coming this day from Jerusalem to Jericho, bearing rich merchandise.

SECOND THIEF (*eagerly*): To join our band?

First Thief: Fool, I mean a rich man.

Second Thief: Ohé, a *very* rich man?

First Thief: A *very* rich man!

Third Thief: We will share his ill-gotten gains in right neighborly fashion—if he be willing.

Second Thief: But if not—?

First Thief: If not? With a crack on the head!

Second Thief: Aye!

Third Thief: Aye! (*They listen, then creep cautiously into shrubbery.*)

(*Enter the* Jew *and his* Servants. *They carry big bales of merchandise and advance fearfully.*)

Jew: Come on, my men, come on; what do ye fear?

First Servant (*trembling*): Master, I like not the look of the lonely road; they say thieves lie in wait here to rob rich travelers.

Jew (*casting a worried look around*): Then hasten, hasten! (*He passes out.*)

Second Servant (*scornfully*): Thieves! Thieves! Have we no sticks?—no cudgels?

First Servant (*feelingly*): So have the thieves.

Second Servant: Faint-heart! Hath not the master paid us yellow gold to guard his merchandise to Jericho?

First Servant: Ai! I would I were in Jerusalem again. (*Suddenly he clutches the other.*) Yonder! Didst not see something stirring?

SECOND SERVANT: Bah! (*Shakes him off.*)

FIRST SERVANT: Let us but say a prayer. (*His knees knock together.*)

(*The* JEW *reenters and beckons angrily.*)

JEW: Hurry, ye fools! It will be night ere—

(*Loud and piercing whistles and cries come from shrubbery. The* SERVANTS *drop their goods and flee wildly.*)

JEW (*cries*): Stay! Stay! Ah, the good gold pieces I paid you rascals! (*He tries to gather together his goods*): Ai! Ai!

(*The* THIEVES *gather closely round him.*)

FIRST THIEF: Master, wilt help three poor and hungry men?

JEW (*looks up and cries*): Help! Help!

SECOND THIEF: 'Tis unneighborly ye are. Our stomachs yearn for some of thy rich wine. (*He lays hold of the* JEW'S *wine bottle.*)

JEW (*resisting*): Help! Help! Thieves!

THIRD THIEF: Bat him over the head. (*They do so; he falls.*)

FIRST THIEF (*drinking of bottle*): Ah!

SECOND THIEF (*opening* JEW'S *pack and eating*): Ah!

THIRD THIEF (*trying on* JEW'S *outer garment.*): Ah—ha!

(*The* FIRST THIEF *makes a grab at the garment. Struggle. All fight for the goods. Suddenly all listen intently, then flee, taking the goods with them.*)

(*The* JEW *groans. Enter the* PRIEST. *He regards the* JEW.)

PRIEST: What's this? Er—r, a dead man surely! I must notify the authorities. Yet—'twould be very awkward to be detained and questioned. They will find him sooner or later. A dead man surely!

(*The* JEW *groans. The* PRIEST *stops his ears and hastens out. Enter two* LEVITES.)

FIRST LEVITE: Humph! One cannot come by this road without finding signs of thievery and murder.

SECOND LEVITE: It gives the district a bad name.

FIRST LEVITE: We might carry him as far as your home.

SECOND LEVITE: Nay! If I brought the fellow there, my wife might not like it. Let us carry him to your home.

FIRST LEVITE: We'd better not meddle, I reckon. After all it's no affair of ours.

SECOND LEVITE (*has a bright idea*): We'll tell the innkeeper to send and fetch him.

(*The* JEW *groans; the* LEVITES *hurry out. Enter the* SAMARITAN.)

SAMARITAN: Ah! Too bad! (*He bends over* JEW.) Courage, my friend! (JEW *groans. The* SAMARITAN *binds up his head.*) Canst walk as far as the inn yonder? (*He assists* JEW *to rise.*)

JEW (*wails*): They have stolen my all! I am ruined—ruined—ruined!

SAMARITAN (*cheerfully*): Better ruined than dead! (*They approach inn. He cries*): Mine host! Ho! Ho! (*Knocks.*)

(*Enter the* HOST. *The* PRIEST *and* LEVITES *follow, peering over the* HOST'S *shoulder.*)

SAMARITAN: I found this poor fellow in the road—beaten by thieves no doubt.

FIRST LEVITE (*to* HOST): It's the fellow I told you of. (*To* SAMARITAN.) Good heavens, fellow, why did'st carry him hither, and wake honest people up in the dead of night? The thing to do was to notify the authorities. You cannot go to the rescue of every man you see in trouble.

SAMARITAN: Why not? We are all brothers.

SECOND LEVITE: Bah! (*The* LEVITES *retire.*)

PRIEST: But, fellow, it was no concern of yours. He is a Jew and you are a Samaritan.

SAMARITAN: Well, sir, we all have one Father.

PRIEST (*sourly*): Humph! (*He turns and goes.*)

SAMARITAN: Will you take him in? Here is two pence for thy care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

HOST: I will obey thee, sir. (*He supports* JEW *with his arm.*)

SAMARITAN: Farewell. (*He goes.*)

HOST (*watching him go*): He's a good fellow—that is, for a Samaritan. (*He leads* JEW *within.*)

(*The* EPILOGUE *advances.*)

EPILOGUE: Priest — Levite — Samaritan — which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?

(EPILOGUE *passes out.*)

MANGER SERVICE

THE PEOPLE

Three Children Clad as Angels.
Three Children Clad as Kings.
Three Children Clad as Shepherds.
Five Little Girls.
The Class Bearing Gifts.

THE PLACE

The chancel of the church, or platform.

THE PROPERTIES

A manger filled with hay, in center of chancel.
A big star on a pole.
Shepherd's crooks.
A hood.
Mittens.
A doll.
A toy.
Stockings filled with gifts.

At the beginning of Advent each child, who so desires, is given a stocking with its mate tucked in the toe, and the name of some child, who would go without the joys of a Christmas stocking, if this stocking were not filled.

Manger Sunday, the Sunday before Christmas, they bring these stockings filled, with toys, something to eat and something warm to wear.

MANGER SERVICE

(*The* CHILDREN *robed as* ANGELS *enter the chancel. They pause before manger.*)

FIRST ANGEL:

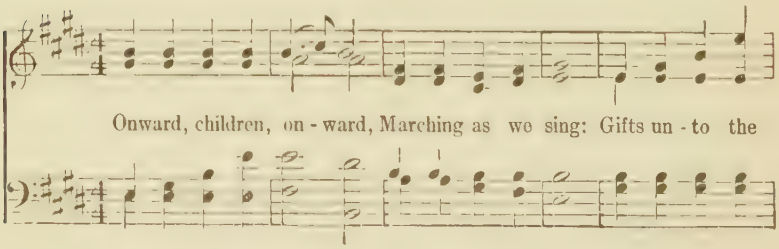
Why is this manger filled with hay,
Placed here? Surely it stood one day
In the stable of Bethlehem?

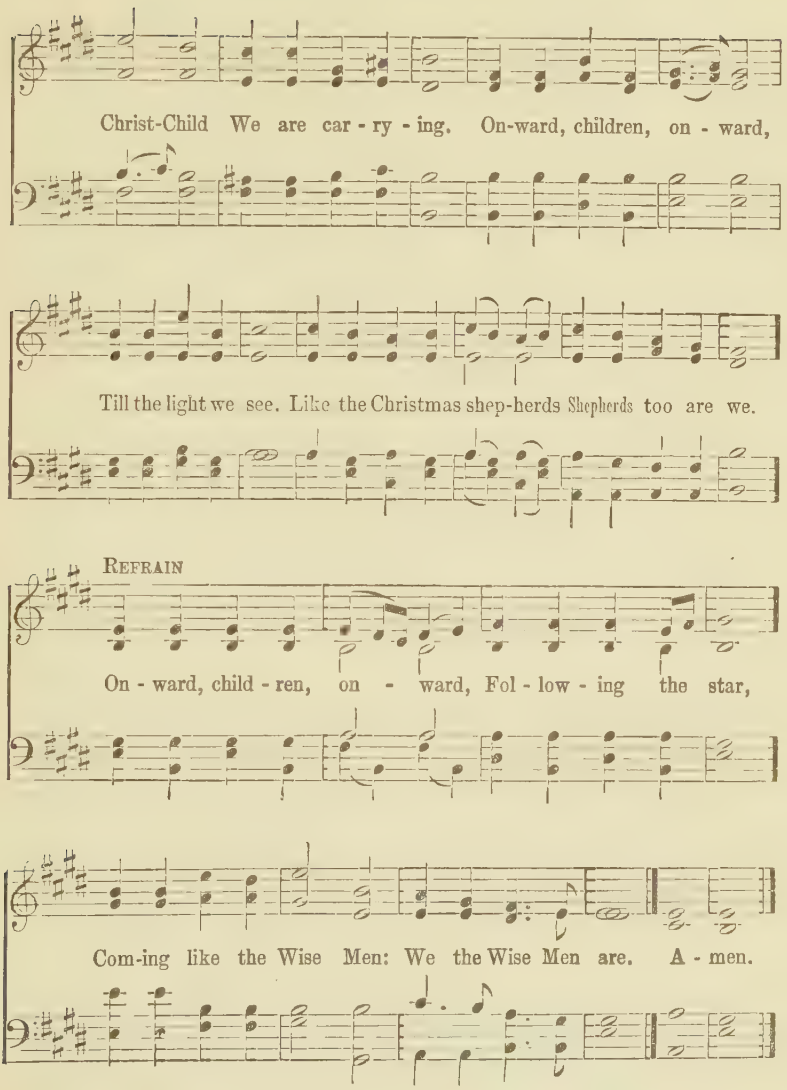
SECOND ANGEL:

There's a whisper of music in the air,
And children's voices sounding fair.
Wait, we will ask of them.

(*The procession starts from the back of the church, singing. First come the three* SHEPHERDS, *then the three* KINGS, *bearing the star, then the five little* GIRLS, *then the* CLASS *bearing gifts, and lastly the* CHOIR (*if there is a choir.*)

Song: Music, "ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS!"




Christ-Child We are car - ry - ing. On-ward, children, on - ward,
Till the light we see. Like the Christmas shep-herds Shepherds too are we.
Refrain
On - ward, child - ren, on - ward, Fol - low - ing the star,
Com-ing like the Wise Men: We the Wise Men are. A - men.

(*They reach the chancel. The* ANGELS *question them in song.*)

Song: Music, "Christmas-time Songs and Carols" by Mrs. Crosby Adams (page 10).

ANGELS (*sing*):

Little children, who are ye,
Clad like shepherds? List to me,
For I am a stranger:
Why do ye come here to-day?

CHOIR *or* CLASS (*sing answer*):

It was the shepherds who first, they say,
Beheld the Child in the manger,
Beheld the Child in the manger.

(*The three* SHEPHERDS *enter chancel and recite.*)

SHEPHERDS:

We come as the shepherds came that day
To see where the baby Jesus lay.
And we pray
The Christ-love dwell in our hearts this Christmas day.

ANGELS (*sing*):

Little kings whom I behold,
Robed in purple, crowned with gold,
Hearken to a stranger:
Tell me why you carry a star!

CHOIR *or* CLASS (*sing answer*):

Led by such wonderful light afar,
The wise kings found the manger,
The wise kings found the manger.

(*The three* KINGS *enter chancel and recite.*)

KINGS:

We come as the wise kings came, they say,
Following ever the star-lit way;
And we pray
The light shine in our hearts this Christmas day.

ANGELS (*sing*):

Children, 'tis two thousand years
Since the kings and shepherd seers
Found that Baby sleeping.
Where the wise men of to-day?

CHOIR *or* CLASS (*sing answer*):

All those who follow in Jesus' way,
And that's the way we're seeking,
And that's the way we're seeking.

(*The five little* GIRLS *enter chancel.*)

FIRST LITTLE GIRL (*holding up a stocking filled with toys*):

Years ago in a manger bare
A Baby lay.
He lived a life so wondrous fair,
He showed the way.
And as he bade, we'd like to give
On Christmas day.

SECOND LITTLE GIRL (*holding up hood and mittens*):

With other children we would share
Our Christmas joy.
A hood, some mittens too I bear.

THIRD LITTLE GIRL (*holding up doll*): I bring a doll.

FOURTH LITTLE GIRL (*holding up toy*): I bring a toy.

FIFTH LITTLE GIRL (*holding up stocking*):
To children who have less than we,
We bring these gifts right lovingly.

THIRD ANGEL:
O little children, if love ye bring,
It equals the gift of shepherd or king.
So kneel, little children, and humbly pray,
Your gifts carry blessing on Christmas day.

(*All kneel and sing. Music, "Gaudeamus Igitur." For music see conclusion Noah's Flood.*)

Father of all children,
For all children we would pray:
Thou who gave a little child
To the world on Christmas day,
Grant our gifts may carry gladness,
Grant our love may banish sadness.
Lead us in the loving way,
Lead us in the loving way.

(*All rise. The* CLASS *comes forward and places the stockings in manger. Then all disperse, singing a Christmas carol.*)

(*At the conclusion, if so desired, a very little child may repeat these lines by* Christina Rossetti.)

"What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd,
I would give a lamb;
If I were a wise king,
I would do my part.
What can I give Him?
Give my heart!"

THE END.

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